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Medieval Irish Vision Literature

A Genre Study

Nicole J.B. Volmering

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

to the National University of Ireland, Cork, Department of Early and Medieval
Irish/Roinn na Sean- 7 na Meán-Ghaeilge, in which the research was conducted.

July 2014

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Declaration

The undersigned hereby declares that this dissertation, entitled *Medieval Irish Vision Literature: A Genre Study* and submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the result of the candidate's own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for another degree, either at University College Cork or at any other institution.

Nicole J.B. Volmering

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AU</i>	<i>Annals of Ulster</i> , ed. S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill
<i>ANT</i>	<i>The Apocryphal New Testament</i> , trans. J.K. Elliott
<i>DIAS</i>	Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies
<i>Dial.</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Dialogues</i> , trans. O.J. Zimmerman
<i>DIL</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Irish Language</i>
<i>CCSA</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum</i>
<i>CMCS</i>	<i>Cambridge/Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies</i>
<i>CS</i>	<i>Chronicon Scottorum</i>
<i>EETS</i>	Early English Texts Society
<i>Easting</i>	<i>Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii</i> , ed. R. Easting
<i>HBS</i>	Henry Bradshaw Series
<i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i> , ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.M. Mynors
<i>HF</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>Historia Francorum</i>
<i>ITS</i>	Irish Texts Society
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LC</i>	<i>Annals of Loch Cé</i> , ed. W.M. Hennessy
<i>MGH SRM</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>MonTall</i>	<i>Monastery of Tallaght</i> , ed. E.J. Gwynn and W.J. Purton
<i>Patrick's Purgatory</i>	<i>Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii</i> , trans. M. Picard and Y. de Pontfarcy
<i>Pfeil</i>	<i>Visio Tnugdalis</i> , ed. B. Pfeil
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia latina</i> , gen. ed. J.-P. Migne
<i>PRIA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</i>
<i>RIA</i>	Royal Irish Academy
<i>RC</i>	<i>Revue Celtique</i>
<i>s.</i>	<i>saeculum</i>
<i>SnR</i>	<i>Saltair na Rann</i>
<i>StC</i>	<i>Studia Celtica</i>
<i>TLS</i>	Todd Lecture Series
<i>Tnugdál</i>	<i>Visio Tnugdalis</i> , trans. M. Picard and Y. de Pontfarcy
<i>VSP</i>	<i>Visio Sancti Pauli</i> , Long Latin text
<i>ZCP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie</i>

MANUSCRIPT SIGLA[‡]

<i>B</i>	<i>Leabhar Breac</i> , Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 16 [1230]
<i>C</i>	Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, MS 641 [B IV, 18]
<i>H</i>	London, British Library, MS Harley 5041
<i>F</i>	<i>Liber Flavus Fergusiorum</i> , Dublin, RIA, MS 23 O 48 a-b [476] (<i>O</i> in Carey)
<i>Fy</i>	<i>Book of Fermoy</i> , Dublin, RIA, MS 23 E 29 [1134]
<i>H^l</i>	Dublin, RIA MS 23 H 28 [712]
<i>L</i>	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 51
<i>Le</i>	Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek (Bibliotheca Albertina), MS 1608
<i>LL</i>	<i>Book of Leinster</i> , Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1339 [H.2.18]
<i>LU</i>	<i>Lebor na hUidre</i> , Dublin, RIA MS 23 E 25 [1229] (<i>U</i> in Carey)
<i>M</i>	Dublin, RIA, 23 M 50 [1008]
<i>P</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Nouv. acq. lat. 1631
<i>P⁹</i>	Dublin, RIA, MS 24 P 9 [739]
<i>Q</i>	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds celtique no. 1
<i>Rawl</i>	Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson B. 512
<i>Rh</i>	Zurich, Bibliothèque cantonale 8
<i>Ro</i>	London, British Library, MS Royal 13.B.VIII
<i>S</i>	Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Sessorianus 40
<i>Sa</i>	<i>Codex Salmanticensis</i> , Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 7672–74
<i>Su</i>	Cambridge, Sussex College, MS 50
<i>StG^l</i>	St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 682
<i>StG^L</i>	St. Gall, Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung, MS 317
<i>T</i>	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1317 [H.2.15b]
<i>U</i>	Utrecht, University Library, MS 178 [I.H.17]
<i>V²</i>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 216
<i>V³</i>	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 220
<i>Y</i>	<i>Yellow Book of Lecan</i> , Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1318 [H.2.16]

[‡] All manuscripts referred to in the body of the text.

et uniuscuiusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit

1. Introduction, Definition and Approach

Quid enim hic occultum?

—*Vita Prima S. Fursei* §9

The mysteries of the unknown have always formed a major attraction to the human mind. From the Egyptian *Book of Amduat* to the modern novel *The Lovely Bones*,¹ there is no shortage of literature through which people have attempted to express what they imagine might come after death. Often such theories appear in revelatory writings, in which they are attributed to a seer. This is a powerful and attractive concept: the seer gains access to hidden knowledge, such as future events, the nature of the universe, or the secrets of death and the afterlife. Many of today's major religions attribute knowledge of the mysteries of their faith to the revelations of one or more visionaries. While such accounts are preserved in various literary forms in both ancient and modern times, one of the genres that came to be specifically dedicated to eschatology, that is, to the question of the Last Things,² in the Middle Ages is that of vision literature. This genre gained great popularity in the early medieval period. Taking the form of accounts of visitations to the afterworld, it drew many of its themes from earlier Christian eschatological literature as well as from Judaic and Classical literature. Famous examples of medieval visions include *Visio Baronti*, *Visio Wettini*, *Visio Alberici* and ultimately even Dante's *Commedia*.³ In this dissertation, I am primarily concerned with accounts of journeys to the afterworld with an Irish origin or provenance dating to the early medieval period

¹ For a summary of literature about the 'other world' from the earliest extant examples up to the Middle Ages see Bauckham, R., *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 93 (Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 1998); Hornung, E., *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes*, 3 vols., Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963-7); Sebold, A., *The Lovely Bones* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2002).

² These are traditionally subdivided into death, Judgement, heaven and hell. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'last (2)'.

³ For the *Visio Baronti* see n. 11 below; for the *Visio Wettini* n. 537. For the *Visio Alberici* see Schmidt, P. G. (ed. and trans.) *Visio Alberici: die Jenseitswanderung des neunjährigen Alberich in der vom Visionär um 1127 in Monte Cassino revidierten Fassung* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 1997). Dante's *Commedia*, though a later and far more 'literary' piece than the early medieval visions, nonetheless has its roots in such literature and, indeed, is, to an extent, the impetus behind much early scholarship on the medieval visions, giving rise to such works as e.g. Labitte, C., 'La Divine Comédie avant Dante', *Revue des deux mondes* Juillet/Août (1842) 704-42 and Boswell, C.S., *An Irish Precursor of Dante. A Study on the Vision of Heaven and Hell ascribed to the Eighth-century Irish Saint Adamnán, with Translation of the Irish Text*, Grimm Library 18 (London: D. Nutt, 1908). See further below, chapter 1.2.

and, more broadly, with cognate accounts circulating in the contemporary Latin West. During the early medieval period, Ireland inherited this form of literary expression through its acceptance of Christianity and the learned culture that came with it. However, many questions remain to be answered: how did medieval Irish scribes engage with visionary traditions and vision literature as a genre? What can we say about the manner in which such material was interpreted? And how do accounts of Irish origin or provenance compare to earlier and contemporary material elsewhere or in different genres? Before we can engage with these questions, both the terms ‘vision literature’ and ‘genre’ require some further refinement.

1.1 What is Vision Literature?

The term as it is used here refers specifically to the literary genre of visions of the afterlife. The *uisio* as a literary genre is derived from Late Antique literature, which is rich in a variety of forms of revelation, such as prophecies, oracles and apocalypses, as well as *katabases* (that is, descents to the netherworld), and dream-visions. It is against this background that the earliest development of the medieval form of the genre must be placed. Models for visionary revelation were—in various degrees—already present in Biblical literature, such as, for instance, in the *Book of Daniel* and the *Apocalypse of John*. In Classical literature we have such vision narratives as Plato’s story of Er and the *Somnium Scipionis*.⁴ The *uisio*, in the form which provided a literary model for medieval visions, was probably developed from the second or third century onwards at the earliest. Whilst the precise point of origin of the genre, if it can be determined at all, is a matter of debate,⁵ the earliest text normally referred to as a *uisio* is the *Visio Sancti Pauli* (also known as the *Apocalypse of Paul*, based on its Greek name). This text relates how St. Paul is taken on a tour of the afterworld and obtains respite for sinners.⁶ Its date of composition is contested, but is most often placed in the late second or early third century AD. It is, however, the revised ‘Tarsus’ recension of the early fifth century which subsequently

⁴ Plato’s *Myth of Er* concludes his *Republic* and tells the story of Er, who is killed in battle, but revives two days later and gives an account of the afterlife. Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* is largely modelled on Plato’s account. This dream-vision was included in the (now lost) sixth book of Cicero’s *De re publica* and has been preserved in a commentary by Macrobius. It relates the dream of Scipio the younger, whose grandfather, Scipio the Elder, appears to him in a dream, foretells his future, gives him advice and tells him about the afterlife. Helpful introductions to both texts are included in Stuijp, R.E.V. and C. Vellekoop, *Visioenen* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1986).

⁵ See further below, p. 11ff.

⁶ A more detailed introduction is provided in chapter 2.3.

became most popular in the West.⁷ It was certainly known in the vicinity of Rome and in Gaul about a century later. From the eighth century onwards, we have evidence that shortened versions had started to circulate, based primarily on the text's section on hell and punishment. These shortened versions, referred to as Redactions, are both numerous and widespread, and were highly influential. With the exception of two earlier Redactions, the earliest of which may be dated to the middle of the eighth century, the date of composition for the main recensions of these Redactions is roughly the tenth century—though most copies now extant were written between the tenth and the fifteenth century.⁸ We further know that from the sixth and seventh centuries onwards visions were widely reported in Western Europe and accounts of such visions appear to have circulated in various formats at a semi-literary level among ascetic and monastic circles somewhat later.⁹ Gregory the Great saw the manifestation of visions in his time as a sign that the world was approaching its end and dedicated the entirety of book four of his *Dialogi* to explaining their meaning.¹⁰ From the seventh century onwards, these accounts begin increasingly to develop into independent literary works entitled *uisiones*. Visions of the afterlife may appear in various sources, such as hagiographical works or homilies, but the first text after the *Visio Sancti Pauli* that is wholly dedicated to and designated as vision of the afterlife is the seventh-century *Visio Baronti*; the story of a monk of the Irish-founded monastery of St. Peter in Longoretus, Northern France, who was unconscious for twenty-four hours and recounted his journey to heaven and hell

⁷ The most recent edition is that by Anthony Hilhorst and Theodore Silverstein, *Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions*, Cahiers d'Orientalisme 21 (Geneva: P. Cramer, 1997).

⁸ See the introduction to the Redactions below in chapter 2.3. The earliest now extant copy of a Redaction of the *Visio S. Pauli* is the fragmentary copy in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 216 (V²) of *Redaction VI*. This manuscript is the oldest of three and dates to the eighth century.

⁹ Both Gregory of Tours (†594 AD) in his *Historia Francorum* (*HF*) and Gregory the Great (†604 AD) in his *Dialogi* (*Dial.*) record numerous visionary accounts. By the eighth century, information regarding visions appears to have been exchanged both orally and in writing, as recounted in one of Boniface's (†754 AD) letters, in which he responds to Eadburga's request to send him an account of a vision seen by a brother who came back to life, of which he was first informed by abbess Hildelida. For the *HF* see Krusch, B. and W. Arndt (eds.), *Gregorii Turonensis Opera, Teil 1: Libri historiarum X*, MGH SRM 1 Ed. Levison, W. and B. Krusch (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii hahniani, 1951, edd. 1885). The translation consulted for this study is Thorpe, L., (trans.), *Gregory of Tours. The History of the Franks*, Penguin Classics (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1974).

¹⁰ *op. cit.* IV.43. Text edited in *PL* 77:381–88. The translation consulted for this study is Zimmerman, O.J., (trans.), *Gregory the Great. Dialogues*, Fathers of the Church 39 (New York, 1959).

when he awoke.¹¹ The term 'vision literature', then, refers to quite a substantial body of texts identified as *uisiones* or containing visions, written and circulated in Western Europe and beyond between the sixth and thirteenth centuries.¹² In his *repertorium* Henricus Fros identified no less than 112 Latin vision texts, of various sorts, written in Western Europe, and recently Peter Dinzelsbacher listed no less than 142 'erlebte Visionen'.¹³ Their lists are trumped even in the medieval period by the numerous visions included in the *Libri visionum* which begin to be compiled from the eleventh century onwards.¹⁴ Though many visions are not as yet readily accessible beyond initial diplomatic editions,¹⁵ many others have received substantial scholarly attention. Moreover, since the nineteenth century the field has seen regular contributions from scholars seeking to work towards a more comprehensive understanding of these texts as a genre,¹⁶ so that we have obtained a fairly good impression of their most significant features. For our purpose here, unless otherwise

¹¹ Levison, W. (ed.), 'Visio Baronti monachi longoretensis', in Krusch, B. and W. Levison (eds.), *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi merovingici III*, MGH SRM 5 (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii hahniani, 1910), pp. 368-94. Translated in Hillgarth, J.N. (ed.), *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750: The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), pp. 195-204.

¹² The scope of this dissertation does not extend to a discussion of vision literature outside of Western Europe.

¹³ Fros, H., 'Visionum medii aevi Latina repertorium', in Verbeke, W., *et al.* (eds.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1988), pp. 481-98; Dinzelsbacher, P., *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981).

¹⁴ In the two books of the *Liber reuelationum* of Peter of Cornwall Robert Easting counts no less than 1105 items, 206 of which concern otherworld visions. See Easting, R., *Visions of the Other World in Middle English*, Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature 3 (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), p. 9. A new edition and translation (previously announced in the volume last cited) of six excerpts from the *Liber reuelationum* written by Peter of Cornwall himself, a joint collaboration between Robert Easting and Richard Sharpe, has recently appeared as *Peter of Cornwall's Book of Revelations* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013).

¹⁵ A number appear not to have been edited beyond a first edition and many more are not readily available in (English) translation. Recent collections of translations aiming to address this issue include Ciccarese, M.P. (ed. and trans.), *Visioni dell'aldilà in occidente: fonti, modelli, testi*, Biblioteca Patristica 8 (Florence: Nardini Editore, 1987); Dinzelsbacher, P. (ed. and trans.), *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur: Eine Anthologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989) (transl. in German).

¹⁶ Most notably, Fritzsche, C., 'Die lateinischen Visionen des Mittelalters bis zur Mitte des XIIten Jahrhunderts', *Romanische Forschungen* 2-3 (1886) 247-79 and 337-6; Becker, E.J., *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell* (Baltimore: J. Murphy, 1899); Seymour, S.J.D., *Irish Visions of the Other-World: A Contribution to the Study of Mediaeval Visions* (London: SPCK, 1930); Ebel, U., 'Die literarischen Formen der Jenseits- und Endzeitvisionen', in Jauss, H. R. (ed.), *Grundriß der romanischen Literatur des Mittelalters* vol. 6, 11 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1968), pp. 181-215; Dinzelsbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*; Ciccarese, M.P., 'Le visioni dell'aldilà come genere letterario: fonti antiche e sviluppi medievali', *Schede medievali: Rassegna dell'Officina di studi medievali* 19 (1990) 266-7; Carozzi, C., *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'au-delà d'après la littérature latine (Ve-XIIIe siècle)*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 189 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994).

indicated, I use the terms ‘vision’ and *uisio* to speak of the literary genre or its manifestation as a ‘vision text’. The nature of this genre must now be considered.

1.1.1 Towards an Initial Definition

So what do we mean when we speak of a medieval vision text? In its most basic interpretation, vision literature purports to describe the phenomenon of a ‘vision’. The Latin word *uisio* is defined as “the act or sense of seeing, sight, vision; a thing seen, an appearance, apparition, a vision”, including the meaning “an image of a thing in the mind; an idea, conception, notion”,¹⁷ in other words, as representing something seen but intangible. The *Oxford English Dictionary* currently defines a ‘vision’ as

Something which is apparently seen otherwise than by ordinary sight; *esp.* an appearance of a prophetic or mystical character, or having the nature of a revelation, supernaturally presented to the mind either in sleep or in an abnormal state.

The implication here is accordingly that a vision is not a naturally induced experience or something originating from within the mind of the seer, but a supernatural phenomenon. This notion is a key element underlying all types of revelatory literature and it is thus also a primary aspect of medieval vision literature. In the earliest Christian and Jewish revelations, the emphasis is decidedly on the supernatural aspect for theological reasons. The Bible itself, commenting on the vanity of dreams, tells us not to believe just any kind of vision:

Quasi qui apprehendit umbram et persequitur uentum, sic et qui attendit ad uisa mendacia ... Diuinatio erroris, et auguria mendacia, et somnia malefacientium, uanitas est: ... Nisi ab Altissimo fuerit emissa uisitatio, ne dederis in illis cor tuum.¹⁸

For a vision to be a ‘true vision’ therefore, it must come from God.¹⁹ In her study on visions in the Bible, Susan Niditch points out that visions and dreams are found in

¹⁷ Lewis, C.T. and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879; repr. 1966) (unless otherwise indicated, all definitions of Latin vocabulary are taken from this dictionary).

¹⁸ Eccles. 34:2-6; ‘The man that giveth heed to lying visions, is like to him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind. ... Deceitful divinations and lying omens and the dreams of evildoers, are vanity: ... except it be a vision sent forth from the most High, set no thy heart upon them.’ Books of the Bible are abbreviated according to the Chicago Manual of Style and all Biblical translations are from the Douay-Rheims translation.

¹⁹ Newman, B., ‘What Did It Mean to Say “I Saw”?’ *Speculum* 80:1 (2005) 1-43, pp. 4-5 and Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*, p. 84.

many varieties in the early layers of the Old Testament and that throughout the Old Testament “dream interpretation is safely described as a God-sent, God-inspired event”.²⁰ Barbara Newman recognises a preference in medieval accounts for such ‘Old Testament style’, unprovoked, “spontaneous divine intervention”, as evinced in phraseology such as ‘there appeared to me’.²¹

Concern about the validity of visions, then, lies behind many of the more negative reactions to vision literature that have been recorded, such as Augustine of Hippo’s famous dismissal of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, on the grounds that it related what is supposedly unutterable (as Paul himself writes).²² In order to clarify the reliability of visions Augustine wrote a tract on the subject, contained in his *De Genesi ad litteram*, in which he identifies three different modes of seeing, but, unfortunately, finds himself no closer to an answer to the question how a vision may be recognised as reliable.²³ His threefold distinction of seeing, however, described as the *uisio corporalis*, the *uisio spiritualis* or *imaginatiua* and the *uisio intellectualis*, became the standard categorisation in the Middle Ages. With the term *uisio corporalis* he denotes a vision perceived through the bodily senses, i.e. seeing something that physically exists; with *uisio spiritualis* one perceived in spirit, like an incorporeal image of something that is not there; and with *uisio intellectualis* a vision perceived in the intellect, or a form of understanding, of abstract concepts.²⁴

²⁰ Niditch, S., *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition*, Harvard Semitic Monographs (Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1980), pp. 12-3, 15-7.

²¹ Newman, 'What Did It Mean', p. 4.

²² Silverstein, T. (ed.), *Visio Sancti Pauli: The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts*, Studies and Documents 4 (London and Toronto: Christophers, 1935), p. 4.

²³ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII.12 (esp. §§6-12). In §18 he admits that he was unable to establish a relationship between the form and the cause (and therefore the reliability) of visions. Consulted in Hill, E., O.P. (trans.), *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century I:13 (New York: New City Press, 2002; repr. 2006). Cf. Newman, 'What Did It Mean', p. 7. Incidentally, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* discussion of Augustine’s three divisions L. Roure notes that “The sign that these images come from God lies, ... in the fact that the subject is powerless to define or fix the elements of the vision.” Roure, L., 'Visions and Apparitions' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), accessed via <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15477a.htm>>. Augustine was hardly the first to be puzzled by this problem: Greek philosophers asked themselves similar questions regarding dreams and dream-visions, leading Cicero (*De Divinatione*) to object that there can be no divine power creating dreams and that therefore they are not reliable. See the discussion in Hanson, J.S., 'Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity', in Haase, W. (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* vol. II.23.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), pp. 1395-427, at pp. 1398-1400.

²⁴ *loc. cit.* It is the middle category which we are concerned with here, although Augustine himself suggests a case might be made for the vision of Paul as an intellectual vision (Bk XII.28).

Thomas Aquinas discusses the problem of visions—under the umbrella term ‘prophecies’—in his *Summa Theologia*, where he quotes Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae* VII.viii.33), who describes a seven-fold division of kinds of prophecy which Aquinas finds incompatible with Augustine’s three-fold division. Aquinas, however, responds by cleverly dividing the seven over Augustine’s three categories, so that he recognises dreams, visions and ecstasies as spiritual visions; visions of the fullness of the Lord as intellectual; and visions of sensible things such as clouds, voices and parables as corporeal.²⁵ Where Augustine does not find a connection between the type of vision and its veracity, however, Aquinas argues that the content of visions can be directly related to its supernatural truth-value: he considers of the lowest degree a corporeal vision which causes a person to act or know, and of a slightly higher degree a spiritual vision given either in a dream, or—even better—while awake. In addition, he argues that the level of expression is indicative of truth-value, so that a verbal revelation in a spiritual vision is lower in rank than a revelation in which one sees a figure approaching him or in which one sees a divine figure. His highest level is, as for Augustine, an intellectual vision where truth is shown without the necessity for any imagery.²⁶

Isidore himself seemingly did not consider there to be a conflict between his seven-fold division and the Augustinian triad of visions, which he mentioned as well: He notes visions seen according to the eyes of the body, according to the spirit and “by insight (*intuitus*) of the mind where intellectual truth is contemplated”.²⁷ Concerning the truth-value of these this third type of vision he writes “Without this kind of vision the other two are either fruitless or positively lead into error. Still, the Holy Spirit governs all these kinds of vision.”²⁸

The attempts of these scholars to distinguish between types of visions is relevant to literary accounts in that they reinforce that, for a vision to be accepted, it was expected to have a certain distinctive quality that would confirm that it was not a mere figment of the imagination—or worse, of the Devil.

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, *Secunda Pars*, Q. 174, article 1.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, *Secunda pars*, Q. 174, article 3.

²⁷ *Etymologiae* VII.viii.37-40. Quoted from viii.40. Trans. Barney, S.A., *et al.*, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006), p. 168.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Some of these distinctions are still used in modern scholarship: Peter Dinzelbacher, a scholar who has spent most of his career analysing various types of visionary literature, has qualified the phenomenon ‘vision’, as opposed to an ‘audition’ or an ‘apparition’, as follows:

Von Vision ist dann zu sprechen, wenn ein Mensch im Zustand der Ekstase oder des Schlafes den Eindruck empfängt, seine Seele werde durch das Walten übermenschlicher Mächte in einen anderen Raum versetzt, der bildhaft beschreibbar ist und wo ihm eine Offenbarung zuteil wird. Im Unterschied dazu gibt es bei der Audition und der Erscheinung keinen Raumwechsel, sondern eine Stimme oder Gestalt manifestiert sich in der gewohnten Lebensumwelt des Charismatikers, der meist im Zustand normalen Alltagsbewußtseins verbleibt.²⁹

According to Dinzelbacher the ‘vision’ is thus qualified not only by supernatural action, but also by the condition of the visionary and by a change of location, in the sense that the soul is perceived to leave the body and go elsewhere. These, then, are the main characteristics of those texts we refer to as ‘vision literature’.

In these texts, as we shall see, the supernatural manner in which the vision is received is often expressed by a change in the state of consciousness of the visionary: the visionary may appear to be near death or asleep.³⁰ The change may be combined with an additional factor altering the state of mind of the visionary, such as continued fasting or illness. In addition, while both auditory revelation and apparitions certainly also form part of vision literature, the main qualifier is the removal of the visionary to an alternate location. Consequently Dinzelbacher defines vision literature as

die Aufzeichnungen über dieses visionäre Versetztwerden in eine andere Welt (Himmel, Fegfeuer, Hölle, symbolische Räume) oder an einen anderen Ort dieser Welt (z. B. das Heilige Land).³¹

²⁹ Dinzelbacher, *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur*, p. 19. Cf. elsewhere: "Von einer Vision sprechen wir dann, wenn ein Mensch das Erlebnis hat, aus seiner Umwelt auf außernatürliche Weise in einen anderen Raum versetzt zu werden, er diesen Raum beziehungsweise dessen Inhalte als beschreibbares Bild schaut, diese Versetzung in Ekstase (oder im Schlaf) geschieht, und ihm dadurch bisher Verborgenes offenbar wird." (p. 29).

³⁰ Gardiner, E., *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Ithaca Press, 1989), p. xv; Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 4. Carozzi writes of vernacular accounts that "le motif de la mort apparente en est absent. Ce n'est donc plus l'âme qui voyage, ce qui modifie radicalement la signification du genre littéraire." This is inaccurate as far as the Anglo-Saxon and Irish vernacular visions are concerned, in which sleep often substitutes for apparent death, but the soul is nevertheless separated from the body.

³¹ Dinzelbacher, *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur*, p. 19.

Within the broader class of vision literature, he then distinguishes two categories, the first of which includes visions in which the landscape of the afterlife, with its sinners and saints, punishments and rewards is the most prominent theme, while the second group contains mystical encounters with the Lord, often in the person of Jesus Christ, which do not have locale as a prominent feature.³² The latter group only becomes prominent from the thirteenth century onwards, and it is the first group which concerns us here.

The change of location from this world to another often leads to extensive descriptions of the afterlife. Eileen Gardiner, in 1989, observed accordingly that “visions of heaven and hell are narratives that attempt to describe the afterlife in terms of an *afterworld*, a world beyond this life”.³³ Elizabeth Boyle, too, considers that many texts referred to as ‘visionary’ describe “full sensory experiences or even physical journeys to an otherworldly realm”.³⁴ The texts first and foremost purport to describe a real, tangible experience. This is usually highlighted through the inclusion of a description of the ‘scene setting’, that is, of the general situation of the visionary, including his location and disposition and the time of day. This roots the vision in an identifiable, historical place and time. This feature is not unique to medieval vision literature and is also attested in Late Antique dream-vision reports.³⁵ In addition, the experience itself is consequently often described as a tour of the heavenly realms, an impression strengthened by the equally prerequisite element of a guide, often an angel, who accompanies the visionary on his journey. In many cases, the visionary appears to be guided through an afterworld presented to him in a hierarchichal order, or is conducted through geographically distinct areas, but he is

³² *Ibid.*, p. 21. That is not to say that there are no mystical visions in which a (brief) visit to the afterworld is described. For instance, Hadewijch is granted a glimpse of God enthroned in her sixth vision. The standard edition (available from DNBL.org) is van Mierlo, J. (ed.), *Hadewijch, Visioenen*, 2 vols. (Antwerpen, Gent and Mechelen: De Vlaamsche Boekenhalle, 1924-5), or see the more recent Dros, I. and F. Willaert, *Hadewijch. Visioenen. Vertaald door Imme Dros. Met in een inleiding en teksteditie door Frank Willaert.*, Nederlandse Klassieken 8 (Amsterdam: Prometheus/Bert Bakker, 1996).

³³ Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell*, p. xii.

³⁴ Boyle, E., ‘Visionary Texts’, in Classen, A. (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, 3 vols. (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. ii.2131-35, at p. 2.2131.

³⁵ John S. Hanson writes that the opening of the narrative typically provides essentials such as the dreamer’s name, and sometimes occupation and character sketch; the time; an indication of locale; and the mental state or activity of the dreamer just prior to the dream-vision. Hanson, ‘Dreams and Visions’, pp. 1405-07.

not necessarily allowed into the presence of God himself.³⁶ It may also be noted that in many cases the visit to Hell or the realms of punishments precedes the visit to pleasant realms.³⁷ This coincides with a notable emphasis on the penitential character of the journey, as highlighted in Claude Carozzi's description of the genre:

C'est un genre littéraire particulier caractérisé par le récit d'un homme —il n'y a quasiment pas de femmes parmi les voyageurs—, apparemment mort et revenu à lui, et dont l'âme, détachée du corps, a parcouru sous la conduite d'un guide les lieux où résident les morts. Ceux-ci sont répartis en deux espaces réservés aux bons et aux mauvais, aux élus et aux damnés. Des subdivisions existent fréquemment parmi ces deux catégories, suivant les degrés de perfection ou de perversité des habitants. Le voyageur est généralement chargé d'un message pour les vivants, c'est un témoin qui parfois a besoin d'expier certaines fautes. Tout l'ensemble prend place dans un cadre pénitentiel qui évolue au cours des siècles, et suppose une anthropologie courante impliquant le dédoublement de la personne en corps et âme. Cette structure comporte, certes, des variantes mais reste à peu près homogène. Parfois, cependant, la séparation de l'âme se fait par le moyen du songe, mais la mort apparente est le cas le plus fréquent.³⁸

Thus, according to Carozzi the most important elements of this genre are: i) a male visionary, asleep or near death; ii) separation of soul and body; iii) a guide; iv) a visit to an afterlife divided into good and bad sections, and susceptible to further subdivision in various degrees; v) a message for the living; vi) a penitential tone.

The last of these aspects is often realised in the form of a variety of punishments witnessed in the afterworld. Indeed, a distinct focus on punishment in the afterlife, rather than on a paradisiacal heaven, seems to be one of the more typical features of medieval visions. Already in 1899, Ernest Becker identified punishments and torments as an essential ingredient and noted two specific forms of torment which are among the most characteristic features of a large number of Christian visions. First, the torment whereby souls which have been torn and mangled beyond recognition again take on their original shape, in order to undergo renewed torment; and second, the torment of alternate heat and cold, which he

³⁶ Often the visionary is sent back just before he reaches heaven, or is only allowed to stay a short time. Notably, in the *Vision of Tnugdal* Tnugdal appears to be shown heaven in quite some detail.

³⁷ For instance, in the vision of Drythelm in Bede's *HE*, in the *Vision of Alberic* and the *Visio Tnugdali*. On the other hand, the *Visio Sancti Pauli* and many texts based on it usually have the opposite order. In many other cases, pleasant regions do not feature at all.

³⁸ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 5.

considers a well-nigh universal feature.³⁹ A high proportion of the punishments normally involve fire, but weapons of torture, often made of iron and wielded by devils, or monstrous animals also play a part. Often the punishment is part of the landscape in the form of polluted lakes and stinking rivers of lead or sulphur. A visionary may meet with obstacles or tests in this landscape too, in the form of bridges or walls, which may seem impossible to overcome.⁴⁰ Such punishments are not only to be found in hell, but may also appear in heaven. If a separate heaven is described, it often answers to traditional expectations of pleasant abodes and descriptions of household of heaven, with its saints, angels and the Lord on his throne. Descriptions of the landscape of the afterlife may therefore take up a substantial part of the narrative.

The purpose of these accounts, however, is not merely to give impressions of the landscape of the afterlife, but to convey a message. Carol Zaleski highlights the didactic character of the visions in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, which are presented as edifying miracle stories, and of the visions in Bede's *HE*, which are presented as conversion narratives.⁴¹ Gregory himself is, in fact, quite clear about his ideas concerning the purpose of visions, writing that they are a warning (*admonitio*) in order that one may fear (*pertimescant*) the torments of hell (*inferni supplicia*) and avoid (*caueant*) them; so that sometimes they are given to help (*ad adiutorium*), and sometimes they are given to be witnessed (*ad testimonium*).⁴² He also states that those wilfully ignoring what they have learned will only suffer greater punishment (*amplius puniantur*).⁴³ Eileen Gardiner further identifies 'justice seeking visions', which reveal a place where justice is meted out, and groups the visions in Bede (as well as others) under 'penance producing visions', aimed at warning the visionary and inspiring him to change his life. Under the latter designation, she also places 'political' visions, in which the visionary 'viewed the powerful of the earth ... subject to punishments in the otherworld', and which serve as a thinly disguised warning to those in power at the time of writing.⁴⁴ The visionary himself, moreover, is

³⁹ Becker, *A Contribution*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ See e.g. Gardiner, E., *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell: a Sourcebook* (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. xxviii-xxix; Zaleski, C., *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987), esp. chapter 4, pp. 61-74.

⁴¹ Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, pp. 28-34.

⁴² *Op. cit.* PL 77:381, 385.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Bede actually repeats Gregory's comments in his *HE* V.13.

⁴⁴ Gardiner, *Medieval Visions*, p. xxv.

instrumental in the didactic scheme of these texts as either a prospective mediator or as the living example of the effect of the vision. In addition, as we shall see, the connection between the visionary and the guide, and the function of dialogue and monologue in the text, play an important part.

To summarise some of the above, then, I might refer to Dinzelbacher's list of structural characteristics of vision literature. Focusing specifically on elements by means of which we may distinguish it from other revelatory literature, and mystical visions in particular, he proposes: that the visionary is usually a man and that he normally reacts to the vision by changing his life (for the better); that the vision normally happens suddenly; that it contains detailed descriptions of multiple spaces including hell, paradise, heaven and punitive fire (*fegefeuer*); that the visionary actively engages with these surroundings, even reacting emotionally to them; that the vision is experienced as intensive and tangible and that it is understood to be real (as opposed to allegorical); that the relationship between the characters is normally impersonal; and that the vision can last from a very short time to multiple weeks. Needless to say, he regards these as merely typical characteristics, which are not all required in any given vision.⁴⁵

1.1.1.1 Inspiration and Innovation

It remains very difficult—if possible at all—to identify a definite origin for the *uisio*, not least because such an attempt is inevitably complicated by the fact that precedents for this genre exist in the Bible as well as in other earlier genres.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the shape of each individual work is at least in part dependent on the models that inspired the author. In the suggestions scholars have advanced concerning a possible origin for the genre, we may observe a tendency to focus on either sources of inspiration or innovation. On the whole, these settle on two chronological turning points in the development of the genre: Ernest Becker, on the one hand, considers the *Apocalypse of Peter* “the earliest Christian vision ... which we possess”.⁴⁷ Charles Labitte, on the other hand, held that the genre proper did not exist prior to the seventh century:

⁴⁵ Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*, pp. 229-30.

⁴⁶ Traditions concerning journeys to the afterlife are found not only in Classical, but also Persian, Sumerian and Egyptian traditions. For convenient summaries see chapter one of Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*; Stuip and Vellekoop, *Visioenen*; or Becker, *A Contribution*.

⁴⁷ Becker, *A Contribution*, p. 2.

C'est seulement vers le VII^e siècle que la vision, dans le sens particulier où je l'entends, apparaît et se constitue comme un genre persistant et distinct.⁴⁸

Becker and Labitte take two different perspectives on the genre, whereby we might say that Labitte's is focused on innovation, while Becker's is focused on inspiration. Becker's choice of the *Apocalypse of Peter* brings to the fore the complex discussion of the relationship between the Christian apocalypses and the visions.⁴⁹ Myles Dillon would seem to be thinking along the same lines, as he names the *Book of Enoch* as "perhaps the earliest example of its kind" in his chapter on visions.⁵⁰ His predecessor, Charles Boswell, too, saw the *Book of Enoch* as "the first non-pagan book of this class [i.e. of the Vision of the Otherworld] that has come down to us".⁵¹ Indeed, John Collins points out that the Hebrew Bible never describes the ascent of the prophet, but that "the earliest Jewish description of a 'round-trip' ascent to heaven is found in the Book of Watchers in 1 Enoch", though such ascents are rare in the pre-Christian period.⁵² In the early centuries of the last millennium, however, apocalyptic ascents gained in popularity and were incorporated into Christian literature, giving us *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. Boswell recognised a long development pattern behind vision literature and saw apocalyptic writings as one of the

tributary streams ... to [which] the Vision of the Otherworld ... owed much both of its popularity and its contents, not, indeed, by way of direct derivation or suggestion ... but as the result of an influence which, in an earlier stage of culture, had determined the direction which the Vision legend actually followed in its later developments.⁵³

⁴⁸ Labitte, 'La Divine Comédie avant Dante', p. 714.

⁴⁹ More on this below in Appendix B.

⁵⁰ Dillon, M., *Early Irish Literature* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1948; repr. Dublin, 1997), p. 134; Seymour, S.J.D., 'The Vision of Adamnan', *PRIA* 37:C (1927) 304-12, p. 304. This is noteworthy in itself as Philip Alexander points out that Enoch has always been a 'counter-cultural' hero whose traditions have thrived on the fringes ('Enoch in Millennial Perspective: On the Counter-Cultural Biography of an Apocalyptic Hero', in McNamara, M. (ed.), *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage: The Middle East and Celtic Realms* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), pp. 1-19. For more on Enoch's survival in early Christian literature see VanderKam, J.C., '1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature', in VanderKam, J. C. and W. Adler (eds.), *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, *Compendia Rerum Iudicarum ad Novum Testamentum*. Section 3. Jewish Traditions in Early Christian Literature 4 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), pp. 33-100.

⁵¹ Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 94.

⁵² Collins, J.J., 'A Throne in the Heavens: Apotheosis in pre-Christian Judaism', in Collins, J. J. and M. Fishbane (eds.), *Death, Ecstasy, and Otherworldly Journeys* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 41-56, at pp. 45-6.

⁵³ Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 2.

He, therefore, does not consider apocalyptic works as part of the genre of vision literature, but rather as influential precedents. In addition, he considered the epideictic character of vision literature a remnant of the Greek religion, transmitted through classical literature.⁵⁴ More recently, Carozzi has observed that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is indeed the first Christian text to take a real interest in describing the afterlife by making its protagonist embark on a tour of the places of the dead, and as such functions as a prototype for medieval visions. Whilst the importance of this text for the distribution of many features and motifs we now recognise as characteristic of the visions cannot be underestimated, the relationship between visions and apocalypses as genres, and the role the latter may have played in the development of the visions, unfortunately remains unclear and would benefit from further investigation. However, since that subject exceeds the scope of this study somewhat, I have provided a discussion in Appendix B.

In line with Labitte's observations, Carozzi further argued that that

Le point de départ réel, après des amorces chez Grégoire le Grand, Grégoire de Tours et les Vies espagnoles des Pères de Mérida, ne se situe pas avant le VII^e siècle, où apparaissent successivement les grandes visions de Fursy et Barontus. On y retrouve le thème de la mort apparente et du ravissement de l'âme ... et surtout, chez Barontus, on voit un panorama complet de l'Au-delà.⁵⁵

Sims-Williams, too, has pointed out that "a precedent, authority and pattern for the development of these types of visions in the Latin West was set by the *Dialogi* of Gregory the Great",⁵⁶ but Carozzi is right to point out that the *Visio Baronti* is a 'first'—not just in the sense that it presents a complete overview of the afterlife, but also in that it is the first wholly independent vision text—as distinct from a text which includes a vision narrative—to appear in the early Middle Ages.⁵⁷ Maria Pia Ciccicarese agrees with this position for the most part: Ciccicarese describes the *Visio Baronti* as a forerunner of a new literary genre which, from the beginning of the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵⁵ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ Simms-Williams, *Religion*, p. 244.

⁵⁷ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 139.

seventh century, became more evident in the West.⁵⁸ Yitzhak Hen, on the other hand, disagrees with her on the principle that

one cannot refer to visionary literature as a genre before the Carolingian period, because only a scattering of visionary accounts survive, and none of them, apart from the *Visio Baronti* and the *Visio Fursei*, is separate. In other words, visions before the Carolingian period were basically a literary device used by authors of various genres, such as history, hagiography, or exegesis.⁵⁹

While this last statement may need to be refined somewhat, in my opinion,⁶⁰ it would seem, on the face of these statements, that there is consensus among scholars that the models for the medieval visions are to be located in the Late Antique apocalypses and that a period of innovation can be identified in, loosely, the seventh century, following the works of Gregory the Great, and reflected in the *Visio Baronti*.

In addition to this, Carol Zaleski has argued for a fourfold development. She sees the *Visio Sancti Pauli* as a first step in this development, in the form of an apocalyptic narrative combined with a deathbed vision. The second step is Gregory the Great's introduction of the visionary experiences to ordinary folk. She then sees Bede's *Vision of Drythelm* as a third stage, at which the vision is expanded—resuming some apocalyptic features—into a “full-blown visionary journey”, while the fourth stage, exemplified by the *Tractatus de Purgatorio S. Patricii* (commonly known as *St. Patrick's Purgatory*), is the “fully realized form of ... this genre during its peak years in the high Middle Ages”.⁶¹ Zaleski argues for the development of a ‘Drythelm line’ among the visions and thus has good reason for selecting that vision here. If Bede's dating is correct, however, the vision may have taken place at the end of the seventh century and, therefore, her choice of this text, preceded by Gregory's

⁵⁸ See Ciccarese, M.P., 'La *Visio Baronti* nella tradizione letteraria delle Visiones dell'aldilà', *Romanobarbarica: Contributi allo studio dei rapporti culturali tra mondo latino e mondo barbarico* 6 (1981-2) 25-52.

⁵⁹ Hen, Y., 'The Structure and Aims of the *Visio Baronti*', *JTS* n.s. 47:2 (1996) 477-97, p. 485. He goes on to say: “Thus, although the *Visio Baronti* may be regarded as one of the visionary accounts which inaugurated the new literary genre of visionary literature, at the time of its composition it had little to do with that sort of literature.” I disagree with this statement as well as with his (implicit) assertion that a genre can only exist if it is a separate text, for reasons which will become clear below. To say that the *Visio Baronti* had nothing to do with the genre of vision literature at the time of writing is untenable, in my opinion, as the text itself clearly alludes to and draws on other visionary accounts and is accompanied in the manuscripts by a title which clearly identifies it as a vision text. The designation used is in most cases either *uisio* or *reuelatio*. See Levison, 'Visio Baronti', pp. 374, 377.

⁶⁰ See previous note.

⁶¹ Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, chapter 3, summarised on (and quoted from) p. 42.

Dialogi, more or less fits with the view that the seventh century marked a time of notable innovation. Her choice of the *Apocalypse of Paul* as the first stage equally fits the view that the apocalypses served as models.

1.1.2 An 'Irish' Vision

There are only a few extended studies of the history and development of one or more of the texts belonging to the Irish branch of this genre, and they have—for good reason, given that many primary sources have not been readily available until fairly recently—tended not to venture into extended generic definitions. Whether there is any meaningful way in which one might regard 'Irish' visions as distinctive, or what their relationship to the genre at large might be, are central questions informing this dissertation. However, defining an 'Irish vision' is in and of itself problematic. The word *uisio* was borrowed into Irish as *fís*, thus giving rise, for instance, to the title *Fís Adomnáin*,⁶² but Latin, not Irish, was initially the primary language used in the monastic scriptoria of early medieval Ireland, though from the ninth century onwards Irish became the dominant language,⁶³ and this is, in fact, the only surviving instance of a title in Irish to accompany a vision text in the manuscript.⁶⁴ The fact that written culture was bilingual means that we cannot determine 'Irishness' merely on the basis of the language a text is written in, though it is naturally an important characteristic of the text. The situation is further complicated by the well-known tendency of the Irish to forsake their homeland in favour of continental Europe, where Irish monks founded many monasteries in the early Middle Ages, so that the notion of an Irish identity limited to the specific locality of the island Ireland is hardly adequate in a literary context. And thirdly, we must allow for the possibility that in some cases any recognisable markers of 'Irishness' are obscured by the transmission history of the text. The notion of 'Irishness' in this context, then, requires a more nuanced approach to account for these complications.

In a medieval context, it seems to me, a text is traditionally defined on three levels: on the basis of its survival as a physical artifact, that is, by manuscript evidence; on the basis of its bibliographical details, that is, authorship and title; and on the basis of its internal features. Ideally, one would have evidence from all three

⁶² For a detailed introduction to the each of the works named in this section please refer to the following chapter.

⁶³ Sharpe, R., *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991), p. 19.

⁶⁴ See my discussion on titles and the word *fís* below in chapter 3.1.1.

categories, though often that is not the case, and in the absence of evidence of e.g. the text's provenance or authorship, one instead collects evidence concerning the *milieu* to which a text is ascribed. For the purpose of this study, then, I propose to accept as an 'Irish vision' a vision that has a demonstrably Irish origin or provenance, broadly conceived, based on the above criteria. This may, therefore, include not only the origin and provenance of the manuscript itself, but be extended to include Irish authorship, Irish language,⁶⁵ a setting in Ireland, or an Irish visionary.⁶⁶ I will immediately concede that on occasion precisely such elements as origin and authorship are obscure or contested, but I have adopted an inclusive approach, on the hypothesis that any approach towards a genre study should be inductive as opposed to prescriptive⁶⁷ and that this approach will precisely allow us to examine the boundaries of 'Irishness' in the genre as a whole, and in the works included in particular. However, before I proceed, I will here briefly consider which visions are traditionally taken to make up the 'canon' of Irish vision literature in Irish scholarship to date.

Among the earliest studies to approach the genre as a whole, is Boswell's lengthy study of *Fís Adomnáin*, in which he attempts to contextualise the text by reference to earlier Christian and Classical traditions as well as contemporary sources. In order to do so he takes the broader interpretation of 'Visions of the Otherworld', including therein not merely eschatological works, but also the legendary works in Irish literature that describe outings to a parallel world. Having centred his research on *Fís Adomnáin*, Boswell writes that

of all the Irish Visions yet brought to light, the *Fís Adomnáin* excels the rest in interest and importance ... and may be regarded as the type of its genre, in its most highly developed form.⁶⁸

In fact, he even suggests it is the most important example of the genre as a whole prior to Dante.⁶⁹ Among the other examples of visions in Irish literature (chapter

⁶⁵ On the unspoken premise, of course, that someone writing in Irish has by definition a connection with Ireland or Irish culture.

⁶⁶ While I do not wish to perpetuate the myth that there is something inherently unique about the Irish that makes them exceedingly 'visionary', a notion debunked by Patrick Sims-Williams ('The Visionary Celt: The Construction of an Ethnic Preconception', *CMCS* 11 (1986) 71-96), attribution of a vision to an Irish visionary is a relevant criterion for inclusion in this regard.

⁶⁷ This was also the approach taken by the SBL Apocalypse Group in their study of the apocalypse as a genre; see Collins, *Apocalypse*, p. 22 and my discussion in Appendix B.

⁶⁸ Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 171.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

four), he mentions the visions of Fursa and the *Vision of Laisrén*, which he considers to be in the same style. He also discusses (in another chapter) the *Visio Tnugdali*, which he sees as an inferior continuation of the genre that has no “definite scheme of the Otherworld”, but which “marks a forward step in the development of the purgatorial idea”.⁷⁰ He adduces as foreign parallels a version of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, the *Vision of Drythelm*, the *Vision of Alberic* and *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, though of the latter he states that it “continued the Irish school of the *fís*”.⁷¹ Boswell was of the opinion that

the Irish Church, in its palmy days, developed a highly characteristic treatment of the theme, and while following, in the main, the accepted traditions of the mediaeval Church, introduced certain modifications of a strongly individual and national type.⁷²

While he argues that “it does not appear that the influence exercised by the Irish school mainly consisted in the introduction of novel ideas”, in his opinion,

as the influence of the Irish school upon European letters waned ... a deterioration in the Vision literature became apparent.⁷³

From his remarks we may deduce that he considered the Irish visions he names to be both distinctively Irish and influential with respect to the wider tradition.

St. John D. Seymour’s contribution on the subject spans a series of articles and culminates in his book *Irish Visions of the Otherworld*. Taking the same broad remit as Boswell, his studies are primarily focused on tracing the development of eschatological thought through the visions and his approach is comparative primarily from that perspective.⁷⁴ He discusses at length, in chronological order, the visions of Fursa, the *Vision of Laisrén*, *Fís Adomnáin*, the vision of Lóchán in the *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, besides many parallels. He does not, to my knowledge, comment explicitly on genre development.

Myles Dillon devotes a chapter to this tale type (as he characterises it) in his *Early Irish Literature*. The *físi*, he writes, represent a “group of texts which derive from Christian and Jewish originals and describe such visions as experienced by one

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 242-3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 245, 239.

⁷⁴ Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 187.

or another of the Irish saints”.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy that the elevated Christian status of the visionary appears to be a key element for Dillon, even though neither the *Visio Tnugdali* nor *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* purport to describe visions witnessed by saints. However, Dillon has limited himself to texts in the vernacular (and thus to works composed in Ireland). He discusses *Fís Adomnáin* and *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* in detail, leaving the *Vision of Laisrén* aside in a footnote.⁷⁶ *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* is—as a satirical tale—perhaps the odd one out in this section, as the dream (*aisling*) is, as Meyer himself writes, rather a parody of clerics, poets and *echtraí*.⁷⁷ Like Seymour before him, however, he presents *Fís Adomnáin* as the prime example of Irish vision literature.⁷⁸

John Carey’s entry in John T. Koch’s encyclopaedia of Celtic culture defines vision literature as

written accounts of existence after death, purportedly related by individuals who visited the afterworld in spirit before having their souls restored to their bodies.⁷⁹

As sources for the Irish vision texts, Carey names the *Visio Sancti Pauli* and the ‘Seven Heavens Apocryphon’, both of which influenced *Fís Adomnáin* in particular.⁸⁰ In this article he discusses the visions of Fursa in the *Vita Prima Fursei* and Bede’s *HE*; the *Vision of Laisrén*; *Fís Adomnáin*; the *Visio Tnugdali* and *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* and rounds off with a section on miscellaneous works, as “there is ample further evidence of the importance of vision literature in medieval Ireland”.⁸¹ Like Boswell and Seymour before him, Carey places the *Vision of Laisrén* in the same general tradition as that of Fursa. Commenting on *Fís Adomnáin*, he observes that what distinguishes this text from its predecessors is

⁷⁵ Dillon, *Early Irish Literature* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1948; repr. Dublin, 1997), p. 132.

⁷⁶ He also adduces paragraphs from *In Tenga Bithnua* as an extension on his discussion of *Fís Adomnáin*.

⁷⁷ Dillon, *Early Irish Literature*, p. 146-7. In the introduction to the text on p. 143 he describes it as a parody on the vision, however.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133. In fact, he calls it the “earliest and best”, though he is aware that it is not the earliest.

⁷⁹ Carey, J., ‘Vision Literature’ in Koch, J. T. (ed.) *Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols. (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp. v.1739-41, p. 1739.

⁸⁰ In fact, *Fís Adomnáin* contains a copy of the Seven Heavens text. See the introductory article and texts in Carey, J., et al. (eds.), *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, forthcoming).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1741.

the extravagant vividness of its descriptions, and the author's evident wish to construct a coherent geography of the afterworld.⁸²

This, as well as an awareness of a four-fold classification of souls, it shares with the *Visio Tnugdali* and *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*. Carey underlines the foreign origin of these last two works and their continental transmission, as well as the “external stimuli” to which Irish vision literature in general owes its existence. He concludes that “it is difficult to see anything distinctively ‘Irish’” in either the vernacular or Latin accounts.⁸³

On the basis of the foregoing we may compile the following list, functioning as a working canon, as it were, of Irish vision literature: the visions of Fursa (in the *Vita Prima Fursei*), the *Vision of Laisrén*, *Fís Adomnáin*, the vision of Lóchán in *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*. The visions of Fursa are rather unique in that they could be (and have been) variously claimed as English (though mainly due to their inclusion in Bede's *HE*), Merovingian and Irish simultaneously. The *Vita Prima Fursei* owes its place in this list mainly to its Irish visionary and setting, as Ireland was where Fursa's most important vision took place and where he preached concerning it for *ca.* ten years. The *Vita* was written in Péronne in Merovingian Gaul in a monastery founded and presided over by Irishmen and dedicated to Fursa, which has made it seem likely to scholars that the text reflects authentic traditions concerning Fursa's own accounts. The text contains references to other Irish characters to boot. The *Vision of Laisrén* is a rather frustrating case, as the text, as we now have it, is a fragment. It is one of three in this list written in Irish and attributes its contents to the visionary Laisrén who had a vision in ‘Cluain Caín’ in Ireland. We do not know where or by whom it was written. *Fís Adomnáin* has been mentioned a number of times already. A lengthy text written in Irish, it is the only Irish vision with an Irish title here included. It is attributed to the Irish saint Adomnán, though he cannot have been the author and is unlikely even to have been its source, as the text was written significantly later. The text invokes Patrick besides Adomnán, but its provenance and authorship are uncertain. Its latest editor, John Carey, has suggested it may in fact have been

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 1740.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 1741.

composed in the Ottonian empire.⁸⁴ The setting of the vision is not described. The vision of Lóchán is a very brief account contained in a longer narrative on a different type of journey, an *immram* or sea-voyage. This is a genre native to Ireland and the text is in Irish. The protagonist, Lóchán, is also Irish, as is the setting. We then have two lengthy twelfth-century compositions known as the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*. The vision in the *Visio Tnugdali* is in Latin and has a continental provenance, but is attributed to a knight from Cashel, who has his vision in Cork. It was written by the Irish monk Marcus in Regensburg, evidently a member of the *Schottenkloster* or Irish Benedictine community that had been established there. Both the text and the abbot of Regensburg at the time of writing have distinct ties with Munster royalty and various Irish persons (also mostly associated with Munster) appear in the course of the text. The *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* was neither written in Ireland nor by an Irishman, but instead by an Englishman from Sawtry, and it has an entirely ‘foreign’ provenance. Its only link to Ireland is through its Irish visionary,⁸⁵ Owein, and setting: Owein had his visionary experience in ‘Patrick’s Purgatory’ on an island in Lough Derg in Ireland.

For the present study, however, I propose to include three further texts known to have affiliations with the above, but not, to date, discussed in this context. The first two of these are two of the medieval Redactions of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, conventionally referred to as *Redaction VI* and *Redaction XI*.⁸⁶ Both are in Latin and have a provenance outside Ireland, but both have distinct associations with Irish visions or other Irish literature and for both an Irish origin or authorship has been posited.⁸⁷ The origin of *Redaction VI* is unknown, though the only complete

⁸⁴ Carey, J., *A Vision and its Context: Further Steps Towards the Interpretation of Fís Adomnáin*, John Strachan Memorial Lecture on Celtic and Gaelic Studies 4 (Aberdeen, forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Owein is in the service of the Irish king who grants Gilbert land to build a monastery and serves as a translator to him (§21). I therefore follow Seymour (*Irish Visions*, p. 186) and Boswell (*An Irish Precursor*, p. 234) in assuming that he is Irish.

⁸⁶ *Redaction VI* and *XI* have each been considered in the light of the textual development of the Redactions from the *Visio Pauli* and in the light of their Irish affiliations (notably in Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli* and Wright, ‘Some Evidence’, see 2.3), but not in the context of genre development. Lenka Jiroušková (ed.), *Die Visio Pauli: Wege und Wandlungen einer orientalischen Apokryphe im lateinischen Mittelalter unter Einschluss der altschechischen und deutschsprachigen Textzeugen*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 34 (Leiden: Brill, 2006) has recently proposed a new classification of the Redactions, but since she does not provide new titles for these particular texts I will continue to refer to them by their conventional title for convenience. See below, chapter 2.3.2-3.

⁸⁷ For *Redaction VI*: Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 82-90; Dumville, D.N., ‘Towards an Interpretation of *Fís Adamnán*’, *StC* 12/3 (1977/8) 62-77; Ó Corráin, D., ‘Can We Prove that *Visio S.*

manuscript has a likely provenance in Germany, probably in the Fulda region. The text has long been known to have close connections with the *Vision of Laisrén*, *Fís Adomnáin*, and *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, with which it shares certain motifs.⁸⁸ *Redaction XI* survives in a sole copy, also with a provenance in the Middle or Upper Rhine area. It has been argued that it contains Irish motifs and a quotation from the Irish version of the hymn *Te Deum*.

The third of these is the text now known as the *Second Vision of Adomnán*, titled in the manuscript '*Visio quam uidit Adamnanus...*'.⁸⁹ This text, through its title, purports to be a vision text, attributed to the same visionary as above. It is for the most part (except for the introduction) written in Irish and addressed to the men of Ireland. It invokes Patrick for the sake of avoiding a catastrophe that, it was feared, would come to the Irish, anxiety concerning which is confirmed by the Irish annals. It is not otherwise a traditional vision text, but is included in the hope that its discussion in the context of the genre will shed light on its affiliation to it and on the development of the genre itself.

1.2 The State of Research

The study of medieval vision literature, though well-established in other fields, has not in recent years received the attention it deserves within the field of medieval Irish. A significant amount of important work was carried out at the start of the twentieth century but significantly less attention was paid to the genre subsequently. Instead, most of what has been published after the 1930s has focused on the study of individual texts, and primarily on those in Latin. The first comprehensive study of the subject was that published by Charles Boswell in 1908, already mentioned above. This was a book-length study entitled *An Irish precursor of Dante*, in which he placed *Fís Adomnáin* in the context of Classical, Oriental, and Judaeo-Christian tradition. Though some of it is now outdated, Boswell's research was pioneering in many ways and he was the first to draw together various parallels from the Irish

Pauli, Recensio VI is Irish?', Paper Delivered at the *XIVth International Congress of Celtic Studies* (Maynooth, 2011). For *Redaction XI*: O'Sullivan, T. (ed. and trans.), 'The *Vision of Saint Paul*: Redaction XI', in Carey, J., et al., *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (forthcoming); Wright, C.D., 'Some Evidence for an Irish Origin of Redaction XI of the *Visio Pauli*', *Manuscripta* 34 (1990) 34-44. See 2.3.

⁸⁸ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, chapter 6.

⁸⁹ See Appendix A. The *Second Vision of Adomnán* has received little discussion to date, and virtually none at all in the context of vision literature.

literary tradition, earlier sources and contemporary continental works to discuss the 'legend' in Ireland and its historical development in general up to Dante. He was also the first to point out that the visions of Fursa and the *Vision of Laisrén* show a certain affinity. Not long after that, St. John D. Seymour published a series of essays as part of his study of medieval Irish eschatology, culminating in his book *Irish Visions of the Other-World*.⁹⁰ His articles include studies on the Irish versions of the *Visio S. Pauli*, on *Fís Adomnáin* and on the *Visio Tnugdali* among others.⁹¹ He also contributed a comparative study of the various traditions on the 'seven heavens' in Ireland, of which an interesting manifestation is found in *Fís Adomnáin*.⁹² In his book he set out to trace the development of eschatological thought through the medieval Irish visions and related texts, such as the *immrama*.⁹³ Seymour also undertook a comparative study of Irish and Anglo-Saxon eschatology and he devoted separate chapters to *Fís Adomnáin*, the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*. Though his theories on the development of the conception of hell and purgatory and on the structure of *Fís Adomnáin* are now somewhat antiquated,⁹⁴ his book was instrumental in putting study of the Irish visions on the map.

The work of Boswell and Seymour followed in the wake of a trend which had started some seventy years earlier to examine the originality and uncover the sources of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, as a result of which scholars discovered a whole corpus of medieval vision literature.⁹⁵ Interest in this new material and its relation to Dante's work grew rapidly and, with the important studies of Charles Labitte, M.A.F. Ozanam, Alessandro d'Ancona, C. Fritzsche and others, vision literature became a field of inquiry in its own right.⁹⁶ Labitte is credited with taking

⁹⁰ *Op. cit.* Listed in note 16 above.

⁹¹ Seymour, S.J.D., 'Irish Versions of the *Vision of St. Paul*', *JTS* o.s. 24 (93) (1922) 54-59; Seymour, 'The Vision of Adamnan' *PRIA* 37:C (1927) 304-12; Seymour, S.J.D., 'Studies in the Vision of Tundal', *PRIA* 37:C (1926) 87-106.

⁹² Seymour, S.J.D., 'The Seven Heavens in Irish Literature', *ZCP* 14 (1923) 18-30.

⁹³ Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 187.

⁹⁴ See Dumville, 'Towards' and chapter 2.4 below.

⁹⁵ For an overview of nineteenth century scholars of Dante see Pitwood, M., 'Dante Scholars and Translators in France 1800-1850', in Pitwood, M. (ed.), *Dante and the French Romantics* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1985), pp. 41-66. See also the short overview in Becker, *A Contribution*, p. 5-9.

⁹⁶ Studies referenced: Labitte, 'La Divine Comédie avant Dante', pp. 704-42; Fritzsche, 'Die lateinischen Visionen'; Ozanam, A.F., *Études sur les sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie, suivies de la Vision de S. Paul, poème inédit du XIIIe siècle, publié d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Royale* (Paris: J. Lecoffre, 1845); d'Ancona, A., *I precursori di Dante* (Florence: G. Sansoni, 1874). Pitwood writes that the first article on the subject came out in *Le Publiciste* in 1809—though it was

the first steps toward “a systematic account of visionary writings before Dante”.⁹⁷ In his paper, in which he seeks to examine Dante's predecessors, he presents his material chronologically and makes regular observations concerning the development of the genre. Though his observations lack argumentation, nevertheless, he is—to my knowledge—the first scholar to attempt such a description of the development of the genre. In much the same vein as Labitte, Ozanam's *Études sur les sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie* was one of the first book-length works on the ‘precursors’ of Dante, followed some twenty-five years later by D’Ancona's *I precursori di Dante*. Ozanam includes discussions on visionary material in ‘poems and legends’ from France, Germany, England and Ireland (grouped together in his study), Spain, the Byzantine empire, and Italy, and ranging from Latin philosophers and classical authors to late medieval visions promoted by different monastic orders, while d’Ancona pays particular attention to the visions of Paul, Brendan, Tnugdál, Patrick and Alberic.

Following in the footsteps of Thomas Wright, who had published his study of *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* in 1844, Fritzsche took the study of the genre a step further, proposing an examination from a *kulturgeschichtlich* point of view, because, he argued, the visions can give us “ein Einblick in das Gemüthsleben der Menschen der damaligen Zeit”.⁹⁸ Ernest Becker's comparative study of medieval visions of heaven and hell, in which he focused specifically on the Middle English versions and their relationship to earlier sources, J.A. MacCullough's *Early Christian Visions of the Other World*, a small book presenting a chronological introduction to the material with a notable focus on early Christian and Jewish material, and, somewhat later, Arnold van Os' *Religious Visions and the*

actually taken from the German *Morgenblatt*—and Becker and Labitte mention studies, sparked by the (re-)discovery of the *Vision of Alberic*, by F. Cancelieri in 1814 and Ugo Foscolo in 1818 respectively. An anonymous 1847 reviewer of the works of Ozanam and Labitte, however, writes that forty to fifty years earlier “to show the sources whence Dante drew his poetic inspiration ... would have excited general disapprobation” (*La Divine Comédie avant Dante* by M. Charles Labitte: *Études sur les Sources Poétiques de la Divine Comédie* by A. J. Ozanam [review]', *The North American Review* 64:134 (1847) 97-117, p. 97).

⁹⁷ Pitwood, 'Dante Scholars', p. 61. Labitte's *causa scribendi*: “Un point curieux et moins exploré reste cependant, qui, si je ne m'abuse, demande à être particulièrement mis en lumière: je veux parler des antécédents de *la Divine Comédie*. Ce poème en effet, si original et si bizarre même qu'il semble, n'est pas une création subite, le sublime caprice d'un artiste divinement doué. Il se rattache au contraire à tout un cycle antérieur, à une pensée permanente qu'on voit se reproduire périodiquement dans les âges précédents, ... jusqu'à ce qu'un homme de génie s'en empare et la fixe définitivement dans un chef-d'oeuvre.” Labitte, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, p. 704.

⁹⁸ Fritzsche, 'Die lateinischen Visionen', p. 251. Fritzsche includes a table of vision literature from the fifth to the twelfth century, including references to published editions, at the start of his article.

Development of Eschatological Elements in Medieval English Religious Literature, follow naturally on from this impetus.⁹⁹

The first editions of vision texts also date for the most part from the second half of the nineteenth century, with a few predecessors such as Octave Delepiere's edition and translation of the *Visio Tnugdali* (1837).¹⁰⁰ *Fís Adomnáin* was printed no less than five times between 1870 and 1909; there were also editions of the *Visio Sancti Pauli* (1885) and the first (and as of this writing still the only) editions of the *Second Vision of Adomnán* (1891) and the *Vision of Laisrén* (1899), to name only texts directly relevant to this study.¹⁰¹ This was a fertile period for the editing of medieval Irish texts in general, and one might say that the fruits of this labour were beginning to show at the start of the twentieth century. The first three decades of that century saw a growing interest not only in the visions, but in the concept of eschatology as a whole, a line of research spearheaded by the aforementioned St. John D. Seymour.¹⁰²

After the mid-1930s, however, scholarship in this area largely came to a halt, apart from a few sporadic publications. In 1948 J.E. Caerwyn Williams' edition of the Irish translations of the *Visio Sancti Pauli* appeared; and 1952 saw J. Hennig's study on Fursa's Irish background.¹⁰³ In the same year, a comparative study focussing on early Christian and pre-Christian analogues to *Fís Adomnáin* was

⁹⁹ Becker, A *Contribution*; MacCullough, J.A., *Early Christian Visions of the Other World* (Edinburgh: St. Giles' Printing Co., 1912); Os, A.B., van, *Religious Visions and the Development of Eschatological Elements in Medieval English Religious Literature* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1932). Each presents a comparative chronological overview of their visions of interest beside earlier examples of the genre.

¹⁰⁰ Delepiere, O.J. (ed. and trans.), *Vision de Tondalus, récit mystique du XIIe siècle, mis en français pour la première fois*, Société des Bibliophiles de Mons V (Mons: Typographie de Hoyois-Derely Libraire, 1837).

¹⁰¹ Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.), *Fís Adamnáin, Slicht Libair na Huidre: Adamnán's Vision Transcribed and Translated from the Book of the Dun Cow* (Simla: privately printed, 1870); Stokes, W., (as "Mac Da Cherda") (trans.), 'Adamnan's Vision', *Fraser's Magazine* 83 (1871) 184-94; Stokes, W. (trans.), 'Adamnán's Vision', in Stokes, M., *Three months in the Forests of France* Reprint edn (London: George Bell and Sons, 1895) 265-79; Windisch, E., (ed.), 'Fís Adamnáin. Die Vision des Adamnán', in Windisch, E. (ed.), *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch* 1 (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1880), pp. 165-96; Vendryes, J. (ed. and trans.) 'Aislingthi Adhamnáin d'après le texte du manuscrit de Paris', *RC* 30 (1909) 349-83; Brandes, H. (ed.), *Visio S. Pauli* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1885); Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.) 'Adamnan's Second Vision', *RC* 12 (1891) 420-43; Meyer, K. (ed. and trans.) 'Stories and Songs from Irish MSS: I. The Vision of Laisrén', *Otia Merseiana* 1 (1899) 113-9. For further bibliographical details see the following chapter.

¹⁰² The number of relevant publications is too large to include here. My 'Bibliography of Medieval Irish Eschatology and Related Sources', forthcoming in Carey, *et al.*, *The End and Beyond* and partially available on the *De Finibus* website, may be consulted in this respect.

¹⁰³ Caerwyn Williams, J. E. (ed.) 'Irish Translations of *Visio Sancti Pauli*', *Éigse* 6 (1948-52) 127-34; Hennig, J., 'The Irish Background of St. Fursey', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 77 (Ser. 5) (1952) 18-28.

completed, though never published, by J.J. Colwell, who studied the *LU* text of *Fís Adomnáin* for his dissertation.¹⁰⁴ Apart from Ludwig Bieler's contribution¹⁰⁵ on *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, Dünninger's¹⁰⁶ study on the political and historical elements in medieval visions and Theodore Silverstein's prolific work on the *Visio Sancti Pauli*,¹⁰⁷ very little attention was paid to the study of vision literature until the late 1960s, when two German studies appeared.¹⁰⁸ Uda Ebel's analysis is one of the first and few studies on the subject written from the perspective of literary theory, under the auspices of the Konstanz school. A similar approach was soon to inspire the Society of Biblical Literature to initiate their Forms and Genres Project, as part of which they produced a detailed study on Apocalyptic literature.¹⁰⁹

The 1970s saw a gradual but significant increase in scholarly interest in apocrypha, eschatology and the medieval world view which has had great repercussions for the study of the visions and related materials. One of the earlier new works to appear on the visions within this spectrum was Carolly Erickson's insightful *The Medieval Vision*.¹¹⁰ In the field of medieval Irish, this increase of interest in eschatology and apocrypha was evidenced in the appearance of two influential publications attracting attention to the abundance of Irish material which had hitherto largely been ignored: these were David Dumville's 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish' and Fr. Martin McNamara's *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church*.¹¹¹ With the appearance of Dumville's influential article on *Fís Adomnáin*, a few years later, came another new impulse towards source study: in his article,

¹⁰⁴ Colwell, J.J., *Fís Adomnáin. A Comparative Study, with Introduction, Text and Commentary based on the Lebor na Huidre.*, Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh (1952).

¹⁰⁵ Bieler, L., 'St. Patrick's Purgatory: Contributions Towards an Historical Topography', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 93 (1960) 137-44.

¹⁰⁶ Dünninger, E., *Politische und geschichtliche Elemente in mittelalterlichen Jenseitsvisionen bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Ph.D. diss., Universität Würzburg (1962). [not seen]

¹⁰⁷ Silverstein, T., 'The Vision of Saint Paul: New Links and Patterns in the Western Tradition', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 26 (1960) 199-248; Silverstein, T., 'The Date of the Apocalypse of Paul', *Medieval Studies* 24 (1962) 335-48; Silverstein, T., 'The Graz and Zurich Apocalypse of Saint Paul: An Independent Medieval Witness to the Greek', in Alexander, J. J. G. and C. S. Gibson (eds.), *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), pp. 166-80 and the slightly later Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*.

¹⁰⁸ Ebel, 'Die literarischen Formen der Jenseits- und Endzeitvisionen'; Benz, E., *Die Vision: Erfahrungsformen und Bilderwelt* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1969) [not seen].

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix B. The findings were published in Collins, J.J. (ed.), *Apocalypse. The Morphology of a Genre*, Semeia 14 (Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

¹¹⁰ Erickson, C., *The Medieval Vision* (New York: Oxford UP, 1976).

¹¹¹ Dumville, D.N., 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish: a Preliminary Investigation', *PRIA* 73:C (1973) 299-338; McNamara, M., *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin: DIAS, 1975).

Dumville examined the text's relation to the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, the works of Gregory the Great and related Irish texts such as *Dá Brón Flatha Nime*.¹¹² This article also re-ignited speculation concerning the 'Seven Heavens' episode in *Fís Adomnáin*.¹¹³ Research in the 1980s and 1990s largely continued along these lines and saw a great number of important studies of European vision literature as a whole, such as those by Claude Carozzi, Peter Dinzelbacher, Carol Zaleski and Maria P. Ciccicarese, whose invaluable work gave the study of the genre a new impetus, even if it focused primarily on continental vision traditions.¹¹⁴

Perhaps due to this enthusiasm, some new explorations of the Irish visionary material began to appear: Doris Edel reviewed Irish concepts of the 'other world', Patrick Sims-Williams critically reviewed the 'Irishness' of the visionary tradition and Padraig Ó Riain re-analysed the historiographical material relating to Ireland in the Lives of Fursa, long neglected.¹¹⁵ Yet, whilst the Latin visions continued to attract regular attention,¹¹⁶ the same cannot be said of those written in the vernacular. The only substantial inquiry into the *Vision of Laisrén* published to date is, in fact, still Paul Grosjean's contribution in his 1963 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique',¹¹⁷ in which he discusses the identification of Laisrén. Even *Fís Adomnáin*, not an unpopular text, has in recent times only been discussed in relation to a debate on the origin of the excerpt of the 'Seven Heavens' which it contains.¹¹⁸ Given the recent

¹¹² Dumville, 'Towards'. *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* is a secondary text related to *Fís Adomnáin*, see also Carey, 'Fís Adomnáin', notes to §§60-2. Cf. Volmering, N.J.B., *Dá Brón Flatha Nime: A Semi-Dipomatic Edition, Translation and Verbal Analysis of Version LL fol. 280a-281a*, M.Phil. diss., University of Dublin, Trinity College (2009).

¹¹³ Cf. Stevenson, J., 'Ascent Through the Heavens, from Egypt to Ireland', *CMCS* 5 (1983) 21-35; Bauckham, R., 'The Apocalypse of the Seven Heavens: the Latin Versions', *Apocrypha* 4 (1993) 141-75; Carey, J., 'The Seven Heavens and the Twelve Dragons in Insular Apocalyptic', in McNamara, M. (ed.), *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage: The Middle East and Celtic Realms* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), pp. 121-36.

¹¹⁴ See among others Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*; Himmelfarb, M., *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983; repr. 1985); Ciccicarese, M. P. (ed.) 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', *Romanobarbarica: Contributi allo studio dei rapporti culturali tra mondo latino e mondo barbarico* 8 (1985) 231-303; Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*; Himmelfarb, M., *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993); Carozzi, *Le voyage*.

¹¹⁵ Sims-Williams, 'The Visionary Celt'; Edel, D., 'De Keltische traditie: De verkenning van de andere wereld', in Stuip, R. E. V. and C. Vellekoop (eds.), *Visioenen* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1986), pp. 98-120; Ó Riain, P., 'Les Vies de Saint Fursy: Les sources irlandaises', *Revue du Nord: Histoire & Archéologie, nord de la France, Belgique, Pays-Bas* 69:269 (1986) 405-13.

¹¹⁶ See e.g. M. Cavagna's and Y. de Pontfarcy's recent work on the *Visio Tnugdalis* and the new editions of the *Vita Prima S. Fursei* by C. Carozzi, N. Groves and O. Rackham in the bibliography.

¹¹⁷ Grosjean, P., S.J., 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique: Un fragment des *Costumes de Tallaght* et la *Vision de Laisrén*', *Analecta Bollandiana* 81:1-2 (1963) 251-72.

¹¹⁸ See n. 13.

impetus in the study of medieval Irish eschatology, a comprehensive study of the visions is a desideratum.

It may be clear from this overview that work on medieval Irish vision literature has been sporadic and unevenly focused and that a fresh look at the genre is required. The study of the genre *per se*, in fact, has never actually gained ground—even though the study of its continental manifestations, and even of other Irish vernacular genres, such as the *immrama* and *echtraí*, has flourished. Moreover, an interest in these texts beyond source-critical and *kulturgeschichtlich* concerns has, in most cases, languished in recent decades—though in those areas, too, much is still to be done. In addition, though each of the relevant texts has been studied independently,¹¹⁹ many of the Latin visions have only received the attention of a critical edition (or re-edition) or translation in the last few decades, and those in the vernacular have, until recently, only been available in older, semi-diplomatic editions, often of a single text.¹²⁰ The appearance of a new critical edition, including a study of all manuscript witnesses, of texts such as *Fís Adomnáin* (in press at the time of writing) and of new editions of the *Vision of Laisrén* (also currently in press), the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Vita Prima Fursei* was long overdue. The text known as the *Second Vision of Adomnán* has not been edited since 1891, and more manuscript witnesses have been found since. The necessity of addressing this lack, especially for the purpose of an analysis of the genre in Ireland, has led me to include a new edition of this text in Appendix A of this dissertation. With the appearance of new editions of these important texts our understanding is greatly enhanced and the means are now available to undertake a reassessment of the genre as a whole. Whilst previous studies have not hesitated to present the visions as an independent literary class, and have highlighted various relationships between the Irish visions and related medieval

¹¹⁹ Though in-depth literary analysis has not yet been carried out in some cases: the *Vision of Laisrén* has attracted remarkably little attention.

¹²⁰ E.g. the new, forthcoming editions of *Fís Adomnáin* and the *Vision of Laisrén* by John Carey in McNamara, M., *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae II: Apocalyptica 2*, CCSA (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming); and my own *The Second Vision of Adomnán* [here in Appendix A] forthcoming in *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology*. The oldest extant Latin manuscript of the *Vita Prima Fursei* (containing Fursa's visions) was recently translated (2007), though the text was also critically edited in 1990 and 1994: Rackham, O. (ed. and trans.), *Transitus Beati Fursei: A Translation of the 8th Century Manuscript, Life of Saint Fursey* (Norwich: Fursey Pilgrims, 2007). See also de Pontfarcy's new edition of the *Visio Tnugdali* and its later French translation: Pontfarcy, Y., de (ed. and trans.), *L'Au-delà au Moyen Age: Les visions du chevalier Tondal de David Aubert et sa source la Visio Tnugdali de Marcus: Edition, traduction et commentaires* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010).

genres, the question of their coherence as a group has not yet been fully addressed. Moreover, though various critics have pointed out shared features between the texts, no substantial study of the generic structure of these texts, and their relation to comparable texts in the Western tradition, has been carried out. In effect, the discussion of their status as a genre in medieval Ireland has advanced but little beyond Boswell's study in 1908.

1.3 Methodology

In this introduction I have mentioned the concept of genre a number of times. As the object of this dissertation is a genre study of the visions, it would be remiss of me not to discuss the relevant methodology at this point. Although I cannot do justice to the subject here, I shall, for the purposes of this dissertation, attempt to provide a brief introduction to the methodology of generic analysis and its applicability to medieval literature, starting with the question of how we understand the term 'genre' and its function in taxonomy and analysis. At this point, it is imperative to realise that, although the term 'genre' is familiar and widely used, the field is relatively young and scholars are not always in agreement concerning a coherent terminology for discussing genre.¹²¹ I am primarily following John Frow's terminology for my discussion, but take full responsibility for my own interpretations of established methodology.

1.3.1 The Methodology of 'Genre'

There are different sets of terminology in place to refer to genre, depending on the model of classification or analysis required. Most often, the word 'genre' is used as a taxonomic indicator. The assumption at the heart of most traditional approaches to genre is that genres are clearly delineated classifications based on a set of rules with universal validity. The traditional taxonomic model, sometimes referred to as the 'Aristotelian' model, which holds that any member can be placed in one class only, has been dominant throughout most of Western literary history.¹²² It presupposes that texts, as distinct entities, exist in a logical relationship with the abstract parent genre based on an absolute dichotomy of abstract/general.¹²³ Yet modern scholarship

¹²¹ Frow, J., *Genre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 65.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 52-6.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

has gradually moved away from this view and scholars have increasingly criticised the validity of this model. Anne Freadman discusses the false assumptions inherent in it, these being the common assumptions that: (i) a text is 'in' a genre, i.e. that it is primarily, or solely, describable in terms of the rules of one genre; and that (ii) a genre is 'in' a text, i.e. that the features of a text will correspond to the rule of the genre.¹²⁴ Freadman argues instead for moving away from a prescriptive model that treats genres as rules and suggests reading genre in terms of sets of intertextual relations. Similarly, Alastair Fowler argues that genres (or rather, what he refers to as the constituents of genres) should be considered 'types', to avoid the assumption, inherent in the word 'class', that all of its characterisations are shared by every other embodiment of the type.¹²⁵

Following Freadman and Fowler, Frow rejects this kind of derivational relation between genres.¹²⁶ He maintains that the internal structure of a genre, which is implied in the continuous development of new manifestations of it, interacts with the wider generic field at text-level. Rather than interpreting genre as a "rigid trans-historical class exercising control over the texts which it generates", the critic should recognise their relations as both historical and intuitive, in that a genre is both inspired by its predecessors and interpreted and renewed by the contemporary author and reader, and may freely adapt, evolve and transform with or without reference to other genres. Hence, a genre is implicitly dynamic and the relationship between the individual texts in a genre should rather be understood as "one of productive elaboration".¹²⁷ Moreover, the structural components of a genre should be taken to be historically specific rather than obeying a formal, universal logic.¹²⁸

We can observe these principles quite well in genres whose existence is spread out over a lengthy time-period, such as that of the visions. Between the sixth and the twelfth century we can clearly trace the genre's mutations and though certain generic features recur,¹²⁹ each text also renews it and bears its own contemporary mark. Any attempt to describe a genre must, therefore, acknowledge that any textual

¹²⁴ Freadman, A., 'Untitled: (on genre)', *Cultural Studies* 2:1 (1988) 67-99, p. 73.

¹²⁵ Fowler, A., *Kinds of Literature: an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp. 37-8, 55-6, 108.

¹²⁶ Frow, *Genre*, pp. 65-7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹²⁹ I do not mean to imply, hereby, that the recurrent features of a genre are necessarily static. Quite the opposite: what is considered a genre's essential structure can change over time, without affecting the genre's distinctiveness. Occasionally, this may result in the creation of new genres out of old ones.

manifestation of a particular genre is a historical representation. This is especially relevant for medieval or ancient genres, where the remove in time between ourselves and the text can obfuscate subtle differences and the danger exists of retrospectively collapsing various types into one. From this perspective, Hans R. Jauss, seeking specifically to address the issue of genre in medieval texts, has argued that one should approach a genre “*in re*, in the process of becoming, rather than normatively (*ante rem*) or in a purely descriptive taxonomy (*post rem*)”, so as to “ascribe no other generality to literary “genres” ... than that which manifests itself in the course of its historical appearance”.¹³⁰ His approach to genre acknowledges the text in its own right, maintaining that ‘genre’ is only sustained for as long as it is renewed in a series of works forming a continuity.¹³¹

The benefit of this reflexive model, as Frow calls it, is that it allows us to discuss multi-generic texts with much greater ease. He refers to Jacques Derrida for the opinion that

Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging.¹³²

The upshot is that a text cannot be equated with a genre, nor can any text be classified in only one taxonomic category. Rather Jauss suggests that we can often identify a generic dominant, which determines the overall shape of the text.¹³³ Fowler refers to this process as inclusion, since a literary work may incorporate another within its matrix without significantly affecting the structure of the latter; and he distinguishes it from an outright hybrid, in which multiple genres are present in equal proportions.¹³⁴ The tendency of certain genres to appear both as independent genres and as incorporated genres has led Jauss to postulate that ‘constitutive function’ may be a generic characteristic. He defines a ‘constitutive’ genre as a genre which has the ability to constitute texts independently, in such a manner that it is “synchronically comprehensible in a structure of non-substitutable elements, as well

¹³⁰ Jauss, H.R., 'Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature', in Jauss, H. R. (ed.), *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Theory and History of Literature 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 76-109, at p. 80. Cf. Frow, *Genre*, p. 68.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p. 80.

¹³² Frow, *Genre*, p. 25.

¹³³ Jauss, 'Theory of Genre', p. 82.

¹³⁴ Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, pp. 179-80, 83.

as diachronically in a potential for forming a continuity”.¹³⁵ A non-constitutive or dependent genre only appears within the framework of other genres. Recognising the pattern in a genre’s dependent (incorporated) forms offers the opportunity to examine its key structural elements in a situation where these are liable to erosion under pressure of the dominant genre in comparison to its independent form. An understanding of the formal structure of multi-generic texts will aid us in the analysis of formal generic characteristics, and in investigating the interaction between genres, especially where there is a tendency for some genres to combine with certain genres more readily than with others.

As indicated above, various models have been postulated in the past with a view to describing the interactions between genres and between the text and the genre. I have here adopted the view that they are possibly best characterised in terms of a prototypical model, in which the prototype represents, not the ‘most typical’ reflex of a genre (which is nearly always a judgement made in hindsight), but the form of the genre the author was drawing from or aspiring to. This nuance aims to deflect somewhat from the risk of applying classification in hindsight and to focus on the function of writing. As each new text reworks a genre in a unique way, certain elements of that text will be more representative of its prototype than others. The cumulative force of multiple texts drawing on the same genre then indeed gives us something of a common core which “fade[s] into fuzziness at the edges”.¹³⁶ That is to say, the combined features of these texts provide the range of possibilities a genre may express. Simultaneously, however, a text’s prototype may shed light on the milieu in which it was written or from which it draws.

The concept ‘prototype’ actually originates in recent developments in cognitive science which have altered our understanding of how mental categories are formed and function. Building on a series of experiments held in the 1970s which show that we create categories on the basis of prototypical templates, this theory argues that generic categories contain central and peripheral members and that, indeed, “membership in a category may be a matter of degree”.¹³⁷ The classic

¹³⁵ Jauss, 'Theory of Genre', p. 81-2.

¹³⁶ Frow, *Genre*, p. 54.

¹³⁷ Newsom, C.A., 'Spying Out the Land: A Report from Genology', in Boer, R., de (ed.), *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*, Semeia 63 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), pp. 19-30, at p. 24 (repr. of pp. 437-50 in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the*

example adduced is that concerning our perception of birds: one might—based on one’s own cultural and personal predispositions—tend to consider pigeons and robins as typical examples of the category ‘bird’, but consider ostriches and penguins as atypical.¹³⁸ This concept is directly applicable to literature, but with the caveat that this illustration of typicality does not mean to imply underlying genetic or derivational literary affiliations. Within any group of texts considered to represent a genre, some (or many) may follow their prototypes closely and be considered very ‘typical’, whilst other may be more innovative and be perceived as atypical. This should not necessarily imply any judgement in the sense of better or worse; in fact, such judgements coming from a medieval audience, which considered the conformative and the ‘cliché’ authoritative, would probably be quite the opposite of today’s.¹³⁹

The interpretations of genre discussed here, that is, the dynamic nature of genre and the perception of a text as a (potentially) multi-generic historical reflex, provide a model that creates room to focus on the individuality of the texts in a specific group and the relations between them as well as on their ‘inner coherence’, expressed as part of the genre structure, without the limitations of creating a taxonomic pigeonhole.

1.3.1.1 Constituents and function of genre

So how can we move from theory towards a working method for analysing the contents of a genre?¹⁴⁰ A significant aspect of my approach to genre is that I take it to be axiomatic that genre is first and foremost a function of composition—be it oral or in writing. A genre is selected (and/or adapted) according to the author’s intentions. On the basis of the above, we may tentatively perceive genre as a framework consisting of various literary conventions which together not only

Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday. Ed. Ronald L. Troxel *et al.* (Winona Lake, Ind, 2005); quoting Sinding, M., ‘After Definitions: Genre, Categories, and Cognitive Science’, *Genre* 35 (2002) 181-220.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 24; Sinding, ‘After Definitions’, p. 186.

¹³⁹ Cf. similar comments in *Tnugdøl*, pp. 67-81 and by Alois M. Haas, who writes that “One should certainly not overlook the fact that the pursuit of spiritual individuality and variety was foreign to medieval thought and consequently also to literature. From endless repetition, from ever-recurring variations of the same main thoughts, and from the constant use of the same terms and images, the medieval author convinced himself of the truth of his ideas and thoughts.” In ‘Otherworld Journeys in the Middle Ages’, in McGinn, B. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* vol. 2 *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture* (London: Continuum, 2000), pp. 442-66, p. 448.

¹⁴⁰ Relevant to this section is the larger issue of the application of modern literary theory to medieval literature. While not strictly required here, I discuss this issue and related concerns in Appendix C.

determine the shape of the text, but encode meaning and value into it so as to make it recognisable.¹⁴¹ As Frances Young has pointed out, its expressive capacity is determined and limited by its specific combination of features. When these are interpreted correctly, they enable the reader to make judgements about content and sense.¹⁴² In effect, the genre tells part of a story which is not complete without interaction with and interpretation from the reader. The features, or ‘cues’, in the text stand in dialogue with the reader in that they are meant to invoke information which is not given but which it supposes the (intended) reader to have. Frow calls these cues ‘implicatures’¹⁴³ and holds that all texts are ‘economic’, in that they manage to set out new information on the basis of old information which is not explicitly given. In this way a text invokes and renews a ‘discourse community’ and creates a generically specific world with its own coordinates of space and time, players and moral ethos.¹⁴⁴ This world constitutes, in Jauss’ terminology, the reader’s ‘horizon of expectations’.¹⁴⁵

The building blocks of the genre are expressed in a number of features, which may represent different aspects of the text, but which can be summarised under the headings of formal organisation, rhetorical structure and thematic content.¹⁴⁶ Formal organisation can include such elements as register, organisation and mode of presentation, but also arguably geography and setting. Rhetorical structure includes the mode of narration, modality, authority, and voice as well as narrative structure, authorial interventions, and formal features such as peroration and exordium.

¹⁴¹ Frow, *Genre*, pp. 10, 72; Jauss, ‘Theory of Genres’, p. 17-8.

¹⁴² Young, F., ‘Classical Genres in Christian Guise; Christian Genres in Classical Guise’, in Young, F., *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 251-58, at pp. 254-5.

¹⁴³ Frow, *Genre*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁴ Frow, *Genre*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Jauss, ‘Theory of Genre’, p. 79. ‘To this extent, every work belongs to a genre—whereby I mean neither more nor less than that for each work a preconstituted horizon of expectations must be ready at hand ... to orient the reader’s understanding and to enable a qualifying reception.’ Frow calls such a ‘world’ an ‘ontological domain’, i.e., “implicit realities which genres form as a pre-given reference, together with the effects of authority and plausibility which are specific to the genre’ (p. 19).

¹⁴⁶ Frow, *Genre*, p. 67 and 74. At p. 9 he distinguishes in greater detail between *form* and *framing*, which is less relevant in a medieval context, where all texts are included in manuscripts. It is the inclusion of the thematic function of genre that caused Gérard Genette to first differentiate it from the simpler modal categories of epic, dramatic and lyric, “parce que leurs critères de définition comportent toujours ... un élément thématique qui échappe à une description purement formelle ou linguistique.” Genette, G., ‘Introduction à l’architexte’, in Genette, G., *et al.* (eds.), *Théories des genres* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986), pp. 89-160, at pp. 64-5. Transl. in Frow, p. 64: “because their defining criteria always involve ... a thematic element that eludes purely formal or linguistic description.” Compare Jauss, for a different, but similarly motivated schematic (p. 83-7).

However, the rhetorical argument is often also asserted in the thematic content, for instance through the functions of the protagonist. The thematic content may be delineated by actions, characters, landscape and *topoi*, but also plausibility, time and moral ethos. Some of these are difficult to quantify and Frow admits they naturally overlap.¹⁴⁷ All contribute to the ‘horizon of expectation’ created in the narrative. All of these can be translated into focus points for analysis and have been taken into account in drawing up a typological paradigm. Lastly then, as the intended outcome of the author’s adaptation of genre (or genres) is manipulating the intended reader’s expectation, the study of the dimensions of a genre, and of its intertextuality, allows us to approximate the ‘implied reader’ or audience of the text.¹⁴⁸ This, too, is an element which can be fruitfully analysed as part of a close reading of the text.

1.4 Approach of this Dissertation

1.4.1 Introduction to the Paradigm

The primary function of a generic analysis of any set of texts is to analyse their internal cohesion and dissonance. As mentioned above, the assumption, more or less implicit in the discussion of Irish vision literature, is generally that the *ffis* is the Irish equivalent of the *uisio*, and that a certain generic affiliation therefore exists between the texts. In order to arrive at a better understanding of these connections and of the genre as a whole, chapters three and four provide a detailed examination of the texts’ typology and thematic coherence. To this end, I have established a typological profile based on thirty-three focus points particularly relevant to these texts. The paradigm is not meant to serve as a list of mandatory elements of a *uisio*, but was rather devised as a tool for in-depth textual and comparative analysis of the texts normally recognised as vision texts. It is developed out of three main concerns. It aims to reflect the main features of vision literature as established by current scholarship, discussed above; to acknowledge the integral composition of genres according to current genre theory (form, theme and argument); and to incorporate individual focus points arising out of my own textual analysis.

¹⁴⁷ *loc. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁴⁸ Young, ‘Classical Genres’, p. 255.

Second, due to the relatively close relationship between the apocalypses and the visions,¹⁴⁹ I have also taken into consideration the results of the Apocalypse Group's study of the former, and chosen to continue, where appropriate, with comparable terminology to that presented in their study, which had a similar function to the present dissertation. This has an added benefit in that it facilitates a more convenient comparison between the two genres. The thirty-three focus points included in the paradigm each serve to analyse individual aspects of the genre's structural framework and have been subdivided into five groups under the headings 'manner of revelation', 'characters', 'rhetoric', 'spatial aspect' and 'temporal aspect'. Of these, the first three categories are primarily concerned with a functional analysis of form and argument, while the fourth and fifth focus primarily on the theme of the revelation. I have chosen to create a separate category for characters to allow for a more detailed analysis of the relevance of characters other than the visionary or mediator for the structure of the narrative, which, in my opinion, has previously been somewhat underrepresented.

The Paradigm

The genre *uisio*, is, as we have seen above, predicated on the notion of a visionary experience which usually involves a supernatural displacement of the visionary to another location. More often than not, the vision also includes auditory elements, in particular communication. The category *manner of revelation* (chapter 3.1), therefore, encompasses a number of smaller categories specifically addressing these focus points. The first of these discusses direct reference to a 'vision', such as through identification of the text as a vision text in the title, and interprets references to the type of revelation in the text. In conjunction with this I discuss the feature of displacement, that is, the journey element of the vision, as part of the manner of revelation and the connection between journeying and seeing. I also discuss references to the method and direction of travelling—particularly relevant in the light of debates regarding 'horizontal' and 'vertical journeys'.

A second point of focus in the category *manner of revelation* is the auditory aspect of revelation, which primarily indicates revelations through speech by a supernatural character. However, this section analyses the role of speech acts as a

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix B.

structural element of the text and distinguishes between the functions of monologue and dialogue. As we will see, most monologic discourse is directed towards the visionary by another speaker. Yet the visionary is himself often engaged in dialogue with such a character; or indeed, there may be dialogue between other characters. In this section I also briefly touch on the relationship between the type of communication and its content, in particular, on the role of question-and-answer formulas and on types of exhortation to the visionary within the discourse in the narrative. I have maintained the distinction made in the Apocalypse Group's paradigm between moral exhortations to the visionary during the revelation, referred to as *paraenesis*, and other instructions. The term *paraenesis*, which I borrow from the Apocalypse Group's paradigm and from New Testament studies in general, is here used with the specific meaning of admonitory speech intended to urge someone to pursue or avoid something.¹⁵⁰ Given that exhortative argument is equally a part of rhetoric, this section in part anticipates the discussion of the role of rhetoric.

The second category (chapter 3.2) describes the roles of the characters in the revelation. As we will see, the cast is often expanded beyond that of visionary and guide, and this category is designed to interrogate the function of each of these characters. The visionary, as the protagonist, is usually the most complex character in the narrative, and characterised by a combination of qualities. This normally includes an introductory description establishing his gender and status—or indeed announcing a (pseudonymous) attribution—a feature which proves relevant to the construction of authority in the text. Particular attention is also paid to his reaction and to the effect the vision—or elements of it—are said to have on him. Significant details of his situation as provided in the scene setting, including the time and place of the vision and his physical or emotional disposition at the time of the vision, are also discussed, as well as separation of the soul from the body during the vision. On the basis of the profile thus generated, we may assess to what extent the visionary himself becomes a *persona* in the genre and to what extent this profile deviates from the profile inherited from Scripture or apocalyptic literature. The second most significant character is the mediator or guide, through whose intervention—or rather mediation—the visionary is allowed to receive his revelation. This figure is most

¹⁵⁰ The paraenetic style was traditionally understood as a style of moral exhortation which does not admit a counter-argument and is thus differentiated from advice. See below, chapter 3.1.4.

often an angel.¹⁵¹ Closely related, in my opinion, to the texts' didactic intent, is the appearance of what I shall term a 'familiar',¹⁵² who appears as a source of wisdom or information. This figure typically has some sort of relation or is otherwise meaningful to the visionary, and may be from the visionary's personal background or milieu. This section closes with a brief description of further characters with an exemplary role in the narrative and of the role of other beings inhabiting the afterworld, most notably devils and angels.

In the category *rhetoric* (chapter 3.3) I focus on the didactic function of medieval visionary accounts, as expressed through exhortative strategies, textual organisation, authorial statements and authority in the text. Such elements of the textual organisation as the *exordium* and *peroratio*, where the author is most likely to include the *causa scribendi* of the text,¹⁵³ and authorial statements are discussed with a view to establishing authorial intent and the envisioned function and audience of the text. Also included are strategies for establishing authority and explicit references to the author's sources.

The fourth and fifth categories (chapter 4) are concerned with the content of the vision only. The fourth deals with the *spatial aspect* of the genre. First, by way of introduction, I present schematically the sequence and contents of the journey undertaken in the vision. The most important focus points of this category concern the general geography of the afterlife, including the the unpleasant (hellish) realms, the pleasant (heavenly) realms; access to the divine presence; and the problem of 'interim'. Besides the types of sins and punishments enumerated, I briefly discuss like-for-like punishments and the level of involvement of the visionary in the punishments—a feature normally said to become increasingly common in younger texts. These are all key elements for an assessment of the eschatological outlook of the text and for an evaluation of wider issues such as the development of purgatory.

My main concern in the category *temporal aspect* is to examine the evidence in the texts regarding universal and personal judgement and salvation. In addition, I

¹⁵¹ In some apocalypses, however, it is Christ himself.

¹⁵² Similar perhaps to the appearance of such a figure in Graeco-Roman vision texts, e.g. in Plutarch's vision of Thespesios, in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, and in Book VI of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Discussions of these are included in Stuij, *Visioenen*.

¹⁵³ See for instance the Preface to the *Félire Óengusso* on the medieval understanding of these elements: Stokes, W., *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, HBS 29 (London, 1905); translated in Carey, J., *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings*, rev. edn (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998; repr. 2000), p. 182.

discuss evidence for examples of scenes reviewing history, or the present; and examples of (temporary) salvation in the present in order to accommodate on-going discussions regarding the effect of the visionary experience on the visionary, the role of intercession and the release of souls before the Last Judgement.

Table 1 Typological Paradigm of the Visions

<i>Manner of revelation</i>	<i>Spatial Aspect</i>
1.1 Vision	4.1 Sequence and direction
1.2 Journey	4.2 Hell
1.3 Auditory	4.3.1 Heaven
1.3.1 Discourse	4.3.2 Access to divine presence
1.3.2 Dialogue	4.4 Other/interim locations
	4.5.1 Punishments
	4.5.2 Like for like
	4.5.3 Of the visionary
<i>Protagonists</i>	<i>Temporal Aspect</i>
2.1 Visionary	5.1.1 Judgement – universal
2.1.1 Identity	5.1.2 Judgement – personal
2.1.2 Reaction or Effect of the vision	5.2.1 Salvation – universal
2.1.3 Situation	5.2.2 Salvation – personal
2.1.4 Separation of soul and body	5.2.3 Salvation in the present
2.3 Mediator	5.3.1 Review of history
2.4 Familiar	5.3.2 Review of the present
2.5 Other beings	
<i>Rhetoric</i>	
3.1 <i>Exordium</i>	
3.2 <i>Peroratio</i>	
3.3 Authorial statement	
3.4 <i>Paraenesis</i>	
3.5 Hortatory instructions	

1.4.2 Approach of this Dissertation

This dissertation examines medieval Irish visions (*uisiones, físi*) as a group from the perspective of genre, analysing their structural and literary characteristics both synchronically and diachronically. My analysis takes the approach that generic analysis can be understood as an analytical tool as set out above, and is informed by the question in what manner the internationally attested genre of vision literature—in both form and content—is adapted and developed in an Irish literary *milieu*. This central question is addressed through two key sub-questions. The first concerns the generic coherence of the key texts, both in formal arrangement and in the

eschatological themes they express. In line with the methodology discussed above, I aim to assess the manner in which each text reflects and develops the generic characteristics which I have proposed as being diagnostic of a vision text. For this analysis I have established the typological paradigm outlined above.

Second, as religious texts, it is evident that the visions form part of a wider body of Christian literature concerned with eschatological doctrine. While an extended study of the relationship between vision literature and the development of personal eschatology in the Latin West lies outside the scope of this study, nevertheless a close analysis of the eschatological message presented in the key texts allows us to gain a better understanding of contemporary views on the afterlife and on the relationship between sin, penance and salvation. The contents of the eschatological message delivered through the spatial and temporal dimensions in the text is therefore considered separately in chapter four.

Lastly, the concluding chapter reviews the generic structure of the key texts as a group and sets out avenues for subsequent research. This approach, then, serves to provide new insight into our understanding of this group of texts as a whole, while at the same time further advancing our understanding of intertextuality, of the development of literary genres and literary adaptation, and of eschatological thinking in medieval Ireland. The upper limit of the period under examination has been set at the late twelfth century. From this period onwards, Ireland is more receptive to contemporary continental traditions and the literary milieu begins to take a new direction,¹⁵⁴ not least due to the ongoing push for reform, the establishment of continental orders in Ireland and the arrival of the Normans. By contrast, the period immediately prior to this date may be said to be a period in which Irish literary traditions are consolidated and renewed.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, in the late twelfth century there is a significant increase in the circulation of vision literature, in particular of copies of the *Visio Tnugdali* and the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, throughout Western Europe and at the same time a shift in emphasis begins to take place which will ultimately move interest away from tours of heaven to hell to more

¹⁵⁴ Herbert, M., 'Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries: Irish Written Culture Around the Year 1000', in Sims-Williams, P. and G. A. Williams (eds.), *Crossing Boundaries = Croesi Ffinniau*, CMCS 53-4 (Aberystwyth: University of Wales, 2007), pp. 87-102, p. 101.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

personal, mystical type of vision.¹⁵⁶ In the light of these significant changes, I have regarded the period up to 1200 AD as most suitable for the purpose of the current study. The lower limit effectively begins with our earliest core text, the *Vita Prima Fursei*.

¹⁵⁶ See e.g. the examples contained in Dinzelbacher, *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur*, esp. pp. 6-7, 21-2, 28-31 and texts no. 13, 14, 17, 20-7, 29-31.

2. Sources

2.1 The Visions of Fursa

Summary

Fursa is a holy man reared and trained in monastic discipline in Ireland (§1), who falls ill around vespers while travelling home to his parents' house. He is carried to the nearest house and remains ill, seemingly dead, for three days. During the first night three bright, winged angels take him up into the air (§2). He hears the psalms being sung. He only realises he has been taken out of his body, however, when the third angel tells him he has been ordered to return him to his body until he has completed a certain *sollicitudo* (§3). His body begins to show signs of life again and he awakens to find his family and friends stunned at his sudden revival, as he has seemed dead to them from dusk till dawn. Fursa, however, concerned about the angel's message, remains ill for two more days (§4).

On the third day at midnight the same signs as before take hold of his body and he receives a second vision. Though he initially hears a multitude shouting, demanding that he exit his body, he only sees the three angels upon opening his eyes (§5). He is then lifted up and guided through the midst of a throng of howling demons who proceed to wage war to gain hold of him. The third angel wards off the arrows with his shield and engages in battle with the demons to defend Fursa, while the Devil protests that he should not enter heaven unharmed (§6). Satan continues to accuse Fursa (using quotations from Scripture), arguing that, according to God's justice, he should not enter the kingdom of heaven. The angel eventually wins the dispute (§7).

After they have left the devils behind, the angel invites Fursa to look down. He sees a dark valley beneath him with four fires and the angel explains to him that these are the fires (Falsehood, Avarice, Dissension and Mercilessness) that burn up the world, growing as sins grow out of faults. Fearing the approaching fire, Fursa is told he need not be afraid as the fire only tries one according to the merit of one's works (§8). As the angels guide Fursa through the fire, the Devil's accusations continue. A long battle ensues during which the Devil and the angel exchange arguments. The angels ultimately win the battle (§9-10).

Fursa sees himself surrounded by immense hosts of angels and holy men. While he is introduced to two venerable men from his own province, Beoán and Meldán, he sees two angels going through a door, through which great brightness and singing burst out, filling him with unspeakable joy. He is told that this is the heavenly congregation, whence the angels come (§11). Beoán and Meldán tell him he has to return to the world, but proceed to give him advice first, concerning the pending judgement (§12) and various vices. In particular, doctors of the Church and princes are chastised and their role in prescribing remedies for various vices and the sin of pride is singled out (§13-14). Beoán further counsels Fursa regarding gifts and property and the temptation of worldly cares, before commanding him to go preach to the princes and priests of Ireland (§15). Then the host returns and Fursa and the three angels proceed through the fire again to go back to earth. At this point the devils throw a burning man at him, from whom Fursa once accepted garments; this contact scorches his shoulder and jaw. The angel explains that this is the result of accepting the garments. The angel exhorts him to preach to all that repentance may be done unto the last hour and advises again about accepting property from sinners (§16).

Fursa then returns to his body, on which the mark of the burn is manifest (§17) and subsequently preaches what he had seen and heard in Ireland (§18). A year later he falls ill

once more and has a third vision, in which an angel explains that he ought to preach for twelve years (§19). After ten years, plagued by crowds and antagonists, he decides to set out onto a small island and subsequently to Saxony (§20).¹⁵⁸ When his twelve years are up, he has a fourth vision in which he is encouraged to persevere, and builds a monastery on the land granted to him by the king (§21). He then joins his brother in a hermitage (§22) until the political situation compels him to leave. He sets out to Gaul and builds a monastery in Lagny. He falls ill and passes away while travelling (§23). His body is kept in Péronne, where a church is being built. Upon his interment during the consecration of the church the body is found immaculate, and again upon its translation to a shrine four years later (§24).

The text

The earliest source in which Fursa's visions are recorded is the *Vita Prima Sancti Fursei*.¹⁵⁹ The *Vita* (hereafter *VF*) is commonly dated to the middle of the seventh century (see below) and was most likely written in Péronne, where a shrine was dedicated to Fursa as patron saint after his death.¹⁶⁰ The work appears to have been copied extensively subsequently, mostly on the continent,¹⁶¹ and more than fifty manuscript copies currently survive.¹⁶² Whatever its popularity on the continent, a copy of the text reached Northumbria in time to be summarised in Bede's *HE*, giving us a *terminus ante quem* of ca. s. viiiⁱⁿ at the very latest for its composition.¹⁶³ The oldest copy now extant, London, British Museum, Harley 5041, ff. 78-95v (hereafter *H*), dates from the eighth century and was written in Péronne, Nivelles or Fosses.¹⁶⁴ This manuscript unfortunately contains significant lacunae due to missing folia, besides other errors and omissions, and is quite heavily corrected by a second hand. The *VF* is preserved in the second part of the manuscript, which has been dated to the

¹⁵⁸ This is an error in the text for East Anglia.

¹⁵⁹ As the title of text suggests, there is also a second *Vita* as well as a *Virtutes* dealing with this holy man, but neither of these texts are relevant to the current investigation as they do not contain the visions.

¹⁶⁰ Krusch, B., (ed.), 'Vita virtutesque Fursei abbatis latiniacensis et de Fuilano additamentum nivialense', in Krusch, B. (ed.), *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi merovingici II*, MGH SRM 4 (Hannover and Leipzig: Impensis bibliopolii hahniani, 1902), pp. 423-51 provides the date and considers it likely *VF* was written to mark the translation of his remains into the shrine at Péronne.

¹⁶¹ Ó Riain, 'Les Vies de Saint Fursy: Les sources irlandaises', p. 405.

¹⁶² Krusch lists fifty manuscripts in 'Vita virtutesque', pp. 429-31, and the appendix to this volume, pp. 837-8. Ciccacese adds a further eight to this in Ciccacese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', p. 248, n. 52. However, I know of no recent attempt to reassess Krusch's list of extant manuscripts containing *VF*. Work in this area would be a *desideratum*.

¹⁶³ Bede's *HE* was finished in 731 AD.

¹⁶⁴ Ciccacese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', p. 278, lists a ninth century date for this manuscript, but see Lowe, E.A., *Codices latini antiquiores*, 12 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1934-66; repr. 1982), vol. 2, no. 202b for an eighth century date. Bischoff, B., 'Scriptoria e manoscritti mediatori di civiltà dal sesto secolo alla riforma di Carlo Magno', in: *Centri e vie di irradiazione della civiltà nell'alto medio evo*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo 11 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1964), pp. 479-504, p. 496 and n. 83 names Péronne, Nivelles or Fosses as the likely place of composition.

second or third quarter of the eighth century, and which is written in Merovingian cursive minuscule.¹⁶⁵ It was recently edited and translated in full by Oliver Rackham.¹⁶⁶ Due to its lacunae it is not, however, a reliable witness for the type of analysis intended here.¹⁶⁷

The earliest published critical edition of *VF*, that by Bruno Krusch, omits the visions, but two critical editions, by Maria Pia Ciccicarese and Claude Carozzi have appeared in recent years.¹⁶⁸ Both editors were mainly concerned with providing editions of the visions and consequently both also omit sections of the text: Ciccicarese omits the end (§§ 18-24) and Carozzi the beginning (§1) as well as the end. For the last few paragraphs one therefore still has to resort to Krusch. However, the editions by Ciccicarese and Carozzi are invaluable for their inclusion of the earliest known witnesses to the text. Ciccicarese's edition is based on nine manuscripts, three of which date from before the year 1000, while Carozzi's edition is based on two of those three, to which he adds a further ninth-century manuscript. The four earliest manuscripts witnesses thus are: *H*; Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatense, MS 641 (B IV, 18), ff. 997-104 (ninth century; hereafter *C*), Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Sessorianus 40, ff. 185-197 (ninth century; hereafter *S*); and lastly, that added by Carozzi, Zurich, Bibliothèque cantonale 8, pp. 352-378 (hereafter *Rh*). This is a ninth-century copy originally from Rheinau with two text-layers, the first layer of which (the main text) is close to *H*, while the second (provided in the margins) is closer to *S*. Ciccicarese's stemma of the manuscripts she examined shows that the transmission of *VF* early on split into two branches.¹⁶⁹ Manuscripts *H*, *C* and *Rh*^{ac} (layer one) belong to her class A, while *S* and *Rh*^{pc} (layer 2) represent the earliest copies of the second, less well-represented branch B, which is known to be related to the version of *VF* preserved in Bede's *HE*.¹⁷⁰ In fact, by comparing Bede's account with *S* Ciccicarese demonstrates that the branch represented by *S* must predate Bede's account, since the changes in the text cannot be drawn from Bede alone and the text

¹⁶⁵ British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8629&CollID=8&NStart=5041>>.

¹⁶⁶ Rackham, *Transitus*.

¹⁶⁷ Ciccicarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', p. 226, moreover, considers the scribe sloppy and ignorant ('piuttosto sciatto ed ignorante').

¹⁶⁸ Ciccicarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa'; Carozzi, *Le voyage*, pp. 677-92.

¹⁶⁹ Ciccicarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', pp. 251-273.

¹⁷⁰ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 678; Ciccicarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', p. 253.

has corrupt passages which are clear in Bede.¹⁷¹ In the light of Ciccicarese's conclusions and given that Bede gives us our earliest attested reference to *VF* in an insular context, I have considered it in the interest of my analysis of *VF* to take into account significant variations between class A and B. Carozzi has previously pointed out that significant variation mainly occurs in §8, the section on the four fires.

Neither of these critical editions is accompanied by a translation and I have consulted both Rackham's translation mentioned above, based on MS *H* and that by Nicholas Groves, based on W.W. Heist's edition of the text from the *Codex Salmanticensis* (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 7672–74—hereafter *Sa*), a thirteenth century manuscript believed to have been compiled in Ireland.¹⁷² However, since, to the best of my knowledge, the position of *Sa* relative to these earlier manuscripts has not to date been established,¹⁷³ I have also undertaken a brief analysis of the variation in the *Salmanticensis* text on the basis of the first ten paragraphs, comparing it with Ciccicarese's edition, *H*, *Rh* and *S*, with a view to establishing the place of this text in the stemma and the reliability of Groves' translation for an analysis of *VF*. My analysis shows that this manuscript, in fact, also belongs to class B and, in addition, confirms Carozzi's statement that *Rh^{pc}*, though related to Bede's account, is not identical to it. The analysis shows it is more likely that the second scribe of *Rh* (thus of *Rh^{pc}*) had a version of *S* in front of him rather than a copy of Bede's *HE* III.19. The details of this analysis may be consulted in Appendix D. The connection of *Sa* to Bede and branch B raises important questions about the origin of the copy preserved in the *Salmanticensis*, which I cannot answer at this point.¹⁷⁴ On the whole, there is remarkable consistency in the quality of the

¹⁷¹ Ciccicarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', p. 254.

¹⁷² Heist, W.W. (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi*, Subsidia Hagiographica 28 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1965); O'Sullivan, W., 'A Waterford Origin for the *Codex Salmanticensis*', *Decies* 54 (1998) 17–24; Breatnach, C., 'The Significance of the Orthography of Irish Proper Names in the *Codex Salmanticensis*', *Ériu* 55 (2005) 85–101; Ó Riain, P., 'Codex Salmanticensis: A Provenance *inter Anglos* or *inter Hibernos*?', in Barnard, T., et al. (eds.), *A Miracle of Learning: Essays in Honour of William O'Sullivan* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 91–100.

¹⁷³ Though Carozzi mentions that he has looked at the manuscript, concluding that it did not suit his purposes, and criticizes Ciccicarese for not including it, he does not provide any further details concerning the text or its place in the stemma.

¹⁷⁴ I have to date found no evidence relating to the possible origin of the copy of *VF* included in the *Salmanticensis*. In later times a copy of the branch B text appears in the *Nova Legendarium Anglie* where it refers to Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium insula sanctorum* of 1626 (Horstman, C. (ed.), *Nova legendarium Anglie* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1901), p. 461). Messingham most likely got his copy from the Bollandists. On their relationship see e.g. Ryan, S., 'Steadfast Saints or Malleable Models?: Seventeenth-century Irish Hagiography Revisited', *The Catholic Historical Review* 91:2 (2005) 251–77, p. 254.

text at this stage in the transmission, with the majority of the variation being due to orthographical changes and the remainder consisting largely of minor lexical changes. Since Rackham's and Groves' translations are based on texts which diverge somewhat from the critical edition, but each represent a separate branch of the original, I have consulted both.¹⁷⁵ All quotes from the text are referenced by paragraph numbers as provided in Ciccarese.

Discussion

It is fortunate indeed that Fursa's visions were preserved in a *Vita*: as a result we know a good deal more about him than about many of the visionaries in our key texts. Though some of the text no doubt reflects commonplace hagiographical motifs,¹⁷⁶ other details would appear to be historically genuine. Fursa was an Irishman who is said to have received his first visions in Ireland and to have spent some ten years of his life proclaiming them to his fellow countrymen. At the end of the introduction, we are told that Fursa left *patriam parentesque* in order to study and subsequently constructed a monastery. As he is still in Ireland at this point in the text, we must read the phrase *patriam parentesque relinquens* as an instance of symbolic exile or 'lesser *peregrinatio*', in the sense of abandoning one's birthplace and worldly life. Fursa is on his way to his parents when he falls ill for three days, during which time he has two visions.

After preaching his visions for ten years, however, it would appear that he experienced some opposition¹⁷⁷ and left for England, where he founded another monastery, which, Bede tells us, was called Cnobheresburg.¹⁷⁸ We are told that East

¹⁷⁵ As I have used Ciccarese's edition as my source text, the translation used in this dissertation is amended from Rackham's, which is generally closer to the critical text by virtue of representing a manuscript from class A. However, it is an oddity of Rackham's translation that he purports to translate *H*, supplemented by translations based on Ciccarese where *H* defaults, while in fact often supplying translations which fit Ciccarese better than *H*, which is not always indicated. He also on occasion omits phrases and his readings of *H* contradict in more than one occasion those provided by Ciccarese and Carozzi.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, the opening of the text is modelled closely after the opening of Gregory the Great's *Vita Benedicti* (for this text see *PL* 66:125-206).

¹⁷⁷ Ciccarese seems to confuse the reasons for departing Ireland and England when she writes that Fursa would appear to have left in a hurry because of barbaric incursion, but the decision was mostly motivated by envious minds against him (p. 233). I have not been able to verify her suggestion that he may have started to have doubts concerning whether he had chosen the right place to establish a monastery (se egli arriva a dubitare di aver scelto il posto adatto a stabilirvi un ordine monastico). Nor have I been able to trace her observation that he had to wait for the waters to calm before he could sail from the small island, where they first disembarked, to Britain (p. 244).

¹⁷⁸ Bede, *HE* III.17-8.

Anglia was ruled by king Sigeberht at the time of his arrival (§20), which gives us a first important clue for dating his itinerary and his obit. Sigeberht is thought to have reigned from 631 AD until he abdicated in 634 and retreated to a monastery.¹⁷⁹ He was briefly succeeded by Ecgric and subsequently by king Anna around 636, who also made grants to Fursa's monastery. Consequently Fursa likely arrived in East Anglia in 631x634 and left sometime after 636. We are also told that Fursa, after finishing the monastery of Cnobheresburg, left it in the hands of his brother Foillán in order to join his other brother Ultán and embrace the life of a hermit. He was called back after only a year, however, due to political trouble. The trouble in question most likely came in the form of Penda of Mercia, who invaded East Anglia in 640/1.¹⁸⁰ It is therefore likely that Fursa was called out of hermitage and left for Gaul around 639 or even as late as 641. The next marker is his reception in Gaul by Erchinoald, major of the palace of Neustria, who granted him the monastery of Lagny, near Paris. Erchinoald was appointed as major of the palace in 641,¹⁸¹ on the basis of which we may determine that Fursa most likely arrived in Francia in 641x642.¹⁸²

More information regarding the last years of his life may be extracted from other near contemporary sources, which also allow us to date his death with more confidence. Though Jean-Michel Picard tells us that Fursa's death can be dated to 649 AD from the evidence of the *Vita*, Bede and the Annals of Ulster, none of these sources actually provides us with a reliable *terminus post quem non*.¹⁸³ The Annals of Ulster hardly form solid evidence as they have no less than four different entries for Fursa's death.¹⁸⁴ In fact, we must turn to the Merovingian records concerning Fursa's brother Foillán for more information. The *Additamentum Nivialense de*

¹⁷⁹ Bede's account suggests Sigeberht came to the throne in 630 or 631. Rackham lists Sigeberht's reign as 634-8, but I follow Kirby, D.P., *The Earliest English Kings* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991) in placing the commencement of his reign around 632 and his abdication in 634.

¹⁸⁰ Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 74.

¹⁸¹ Fouracre, P. and R.A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography, 640-720*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996), p. 16.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 315. They follow Plummer, C. (ed.), *Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols. (London: Frowde, 1986), pp. ii.173, in suggesting some time between 641 and 644.

¹⁸³ Picard, J.-M., 'Church and Politics in the Seventh Century: The Irish Exile of King Dagobert II', in Picard, J.-M. (ed.), *Ireland and Northern France, AD 600-850* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1991), pp. 27-52, p. 32. Plummer, *loc. cit.*, on the other hand cautions that we can only fix his life vaguely.

¹⁸⁴ *AU*: 647(648) *Fursu craibdhech obiit.*; 648(649) *Quies Fursi in Barruna.*; 655(656) *Vel hic Fursa secundum alios.*; 660/1 *Fursu in Persuna pausauit*. Concerning his vision: 626(627) *Visio quam uidit Furseus religiosus episcopus*.

*Fuillano*¹⁸⁵ is a sequel to the *Vita Prima*, picking up after Fursa's departure for Francia. It describes the period after Fursa's departure as a violent one and it mentions that Foillán, who had been in charge of Cnobheresburg, decided to leave East Anglia after his monastery was raided and king Anna was expelled. This event refers to another of Penda's invasions of East Anglia and can be dated to the period 649-52.¹⁸⁶ Foillán then loaded a ship with monks redeemed from captivity, relics and other equipment salvaged after the raid and departed for Gaul. There he was received by Erchinoald in Péronne, where Fursa's remains had been interred in the meantime.¹⁸⁷ However, after a short period some discord seems to have arisen between the mayor and his new protégés and Erchinoald expelled them. They were subsequently welcomed in Nivelles (in modern Belgium) by Saints Ita, the widow of Pippin of Landen, and Gertrude, her daughter. Ita had only recently founded the monastery of Nivelles (647x50) and generously provided Foillán with lands to found his own monastery at Fosses.¹⁸⁸ St. Ita, however, died in 650¹⁸⁹ and the *Additamentum* continues to describe how Foillán was murdered on his way to a 'placitium' or court of dispute the following year. This places Foillán's arrival in Pippinid country in 649 or 650 and his arrival in Francia most likely in 649. Picard appears to reckon that Foillán arrived in May, 649, only a few months after his brother's death on January 16, although I have not been able to verify where he obtained the evidence for this dating.¹⁹⁰ Taking into account the available information concerning Foillán it is most likely that Fursa's death took place in January of 649 AD and that Fursa spent around seven or eight years in France before his death, something rather obscured by the *Vita*'s 'non multum post'.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Ed. B. Krusch, *op. cit.*, p. 449-51; translated in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 327-9.

¹⁸⁶ Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 79.

¹⁸⁷ It is not known whether Foillán could have been in time for his brother's interment or whether he was aware of his passing and no mention of this is made in our sources. It seems likely that Foillán arrived after the event.

¹⁸⁸ This place is also called Bebrona in the text. The modern name is Fosses. For information on Sts. Ita and Gertrude see the *Vita S. Geretrudis* and *De uirtutibus sanctae Geretrudis* in Krusch, B. (ed.) 'Vita S. Geretrudis', *Fredgarii et aliorum chronica Vitae sanctorum*, MGH SRM 2 (Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii hahniani, 1888), pp. 447-74; translated in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 319-26. Cf. Picard, 'Church and Politics', pp. 34-5.

¹⁸⁹ See Picard, 'Church and Politics', pp. 34-5 for a discussion of the dating of Foillán's and Ita's death.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Rackham, *Transitus*, p. 56.

This confirms the first two entries in the Annals of Ulster, for 647(648) ‘*Fursu craibdhech obiit*’ and 648(649) ‘*Quies Fursi in Barruna*’. The confusion involved in assigning the correct date to this event is unsurprising and reflected in the entries themselves. The entry for 649 mentions Barruna, i.e. Péronne, as the place of his death, whereas Fursa had in fact been abbot of Lagny and had died in Mézerolles. The church of Péronne, then nearly finished, was to be consecrated thirty days after Fursa’s death and his burial was postponed until the consecration.¹⁹² It seems likely therefore that the news of Fursa’s death and translation reached Ireland by word of mouth, possibly from a traveller who visited Péronne, rather than through the *Vita Fursei*. Likewise, the two later entries, for 655(656) ‘*Vel hic Fursa secundum alios*’ and for 660/1 ‘*Fursu in Persuna pausauit*’ most likely refer to the translation of his relics into a purpose-built shrine near the altar about four years after his death. The delay in recording the news merely suggests that it did not reach Ireland until a few years after the event. Though contact between Francia and Ireland was intense at the time, partially on account of the large numbers of Irish monks settled there, the annals do not betray any evidence of this. The only other entry in the Annals of Ulster regarding Francia in this period concerns either the death or reign of ‘Flodobuir’, usually taken to refer to Clothar III, though Picard argues that the name refers more likely to Childebert.¹⁹³ This entry is similarly listed two years after the event. The annal entries therefore suggest that it is unlikely that the news concerning his death—let alone the *Vita*—reached Ireland before the 660s. However, the listing concerning what, to the Irish, must have been a fairly unfamiliar French potentate may be significant when read in conjunction with the last annal entry for 660/1 which reads ‘*Fursu in Persuna pausauit*’. The spelling *Persuna*, significantly different from the spelling *Barruna* used ten years previously, suggests that the scribe may have had access to a new source. As it happens the spelling is also very close to the spelling for Péronne in the oldest extant manuscript containing the *Vita*, manuscript *H*, which reads ‘*persona*’.¹⁹⁴ While this spelling, taken on its own, does not constitute convincing evidence, it may nevertheless suggest the possibility that

¹⁹² Most scholars seem to agree on the period of 27 days; according to Krusch (p. 429), however, this is the reading only in Bede and two other manuscripts (his B1a = a codex in Brussels no. 7984 “Weissenburgensis” and 2a = Brit. Mus. Cot. Nero E I), while the other manuscripts have 30 days, as per Krusch’s edition.

¹⁹³ *AU* 658/9. Picard, ‘Church and Politics’, pp. 41-2.

¹⁹⁴ Rackham, *Transitus*, p. 56. The manuscripts of the *Félire Óengusso* read ‘Parona’ (Stokes, *Félire Óengusso*, p. 44).

the Irish¹⁹⁵ had obtained access to a copy of the *Vita Fursei* by the mid-660s. The *Vita* was, after all, certainly known to Bede by ca. 730 AD. It is not impossible that the carrier of the news which provoked the annal entry— and, possibly, the text?— also informed the scribe of the events concerning “Flodobuir”. Another possible route of transmission is through the scholar Aldhelm, who is known to have corresponded with abbot Cellanus of Péronne (†706 AD) during his abbacy at Malmesbury (675x705 AD).¹⁹⁶ Cellanus knew of Aldhelm’s *Carmen de Virginitate* and requests more of his work in the sole surviving letter to him.¹⁹⁷ It is unknown whether Aldhelm had read the *Vita*,¹⁹⁸ but is it not appealing to think that Cellanus might have sent him his predecessor’s *Vita* in return for a copy of the *Carmen*? If so, this would certainly go a long way to explain how Bede obtained a copy of it and how it leaves open the possibility of the text reaching Iona from Northumbria. However, this must remain mere speculation. With no Irish copy surviving,¹⁹⁹ it is unfortunate that we cannot say with certainty when the *Vita* reached Ireland.

2.2 The Vision of Laisrén

Summary

Laisrén goes to *Cluain Caín* in Connacht from ‘*Cluain*’ to cleanse the church. After fasting for three three-day periods, he falls asleep in the oratory. At night, in his sleep, he hears a voice saying ‘Arise!’. The church is now lit and a radiant shape invites him to approach. As he suddenly realises that his soul has left his body and the church has opened up to heaven, two angels raise him into the air. There he sees a host of angels and a host of demons, ready in battle-formation, to fight the angels for his soul. One of them proclaims Laisrén’s sins, but is told by the angel that he has ‘no portion in this man’ as he had made his confession and penances. The demon quotes Matt. 18:3 in protest, but the angel points out that Laisrén has not come to stay, but to carry a warning back. At this point Laisrén is taken by the angels on a tour of hell. After proceeding northward along a great valley, they enter a cave – the porch of hell – until they reach the doorway of hell, which is a valley on top of a black mountain. There he sees people he knows to be alive and the angel explains these are people under God’s displeasure. He is told not to warn them, lest they despair, but to preach repentance.

¹⁹⁵ Or, if this section of the Annals indeed originates in Iona, at least the Irish settled there.

¹⁹⁶ See Orchard, A., *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), pp. 240-1; Lapidge, M. and M. Herren (trans.), *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1979), pp. 149; Sims-Williams, P., *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), p. 351.

¹⁹⁷ For the letter see Traube, L., *Perrona Scottorum: Ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und zur Palaeographie des Mittelalters*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Philologische und Historische Klasse 10 (Munich: Franz in Komm, 1900), pp. 478-9.

¹⁹⁸ I know of no evidence confirming or refuting such a theory.

¹⁹⁹ There is a Middle Irish translation, however, not from *VF*, but from Bede’s account in the *HE*. See Ní Chatháin, P., ‘Bede’s Ecclesiastical History in Irish’, *Peritia* 3 (1984) 115-30.

After that he enters hell, where he sees souls suffering various forms of torment. The angel explains the distinction between them. [Here the text breaks off.]

The text

The *Vision of Laisrén* (hereafter *VL*) is the oldest vision text preserved in Irish. The only surviving copy, unfortunately fragmentary, is preserved at fols. 44ra-44vb of Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson B.512 (*Rawl*), a composite manuscript from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, but originally consisting of at least five separate manuscripts compiled at different stages.²⁰⁰ Our text forms part of the section referred to as Part III, section 2 by Brian Ó Cuív, which ends with an incomplete quire missing a number of leaves. This section contains materials with a religious interest, such as the *Apgitir Chrábaid*. The *VL* is preserved on the last leaf of this section, yet, though the text ends abruptly, it is not the last item on the page. This suggests the ending was likely already lost when the text was copied into *Rawl*. A paragraph concerning churches in Munster was added after *VL*, possibly to fill out the page.

The lack of surviving copies suggests the text was apparently not very popular in the Middle Ages and in modern times its popularity amongst scholars has been equally limited. The only published edition and translation of the *Vision of Laisrén* appeared in *Otia Merseiana* I as part of Kuno Meyer's series of *Stories and Songs from Irish Manuscripts* in 1899.²⁰¹ A much desired new edition and introduction by John Carey is currently in press and is the text used for analysis.²⁰²

Discussion

As a result of the lack of attention the text has received, however, many details of the text have remained uncertain, including the identity of the visionary and the location of the vision. Meyer did not comment extensively on either aspect of the text. He observed that Laisrén is quite a common name, but proposed nonetheless, without any further evidence as far as I can see, that we assume the saint is to be identified with Laisrén of Lethglenn (now Leighlin), as the most well-known saint of that

²⁰⁰ See Ó Cuív, B., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries*, 2 vols. (Dublin: DIAS, 2001-2003), pp. 1.223-44 .

²⁰¹ Meyer, 'The Vision of Laisrén'.

²⁰² Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'. I am much obliged to John Carey for making his edition available to me in advance of publication.

name.²⁰³ Laisrén's identity was also briefly discussed by Paul Grosjean, who suggested that the Laisrén mentioned in *VL* is possibly to be identified as the anchorite in an anecdote preserved both in the margin of the *Monastery of Tallaght* (*MonTall*) in RIA Stowe C.1.2 and separately in RIA 3.B.23.²⁰⁴ This identification is unfortunately as problematic as it is tempting. The Laisrén in this anecdote is described as an anchorite based in Clonmacnoise. The suggested identification is tempting because of the reference to the place "Cluain" in *VL*, which, when used on its own as a place name, often stands for *Cluain moccu Nóis* or Clonmacnoise—though it could equally refer to Clonard (*Cluain Iraird*) or to one of the many other monastic settlements with this element in their name.²⁰⁵ However, without additional details concerning this anchorite, his identification remains obscure. Grosjean admits that the anchorite Laisrén cannot be traced in the annals or genealogies, so that it remains impossible to determine when he may have lived. Moreover, he himself suggests that this anecdote is likely inserted into *MonTall* at a later date, as the text itself suggests, further obscuring the identification.²⁰⁶ It must be noted, at this point, that we know even less about the Laisrén from *VL*: there is no clear indication of his status or position. We are thus left with a comparison of two otherwise unidentifiable personages called Laisrén. Nor do I observe enough similarity between *VL* and the anecdote concerning the anchorite who had an *aislingi coildnide* or carnal dream, as Grosjean posits,²⁰⁷ to lend support to a link between the two texts. With the exception of the name 'Laisrén' and the unconfirmed reference to Clonmacnoise, they have little else in common.

In fact, Grosjean's most suggestive contribution concerns two entries in the annals of Ulster for the year 787 (recte 788) and 785 (r. 786). The first of these records "*Lex Ciarain for Connachta*", i.e. that the power of Clonmacnois was felt in

²⁰³ Meyer, 'The Vision of Laisrén', p. 114. St. John D. Seymour and Charles Boswell follow Meyer unquestioningly in this assertion.

²⁰⁴ Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique', p. 254.

²⁰⁵ Cf; *ibid.*, p. 257; Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'; Hogan, E., *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1910), pp. 256-7.

²⁰⁶ Gwynn, E. J. and W. J. Purton (ed. and trans.) 'The Monastery of Tallaght', *PRIA* 29 (1911) 115-79, p. 252, n.3; *MonTall* §66 *do-scribus sin domdoig 7 inddí sceol so 7 ni hainfis acht día necar doniam indnos*. Gwynn/Purton: 'I have written this on my own account, and these two tales; and it is not in ignorance, but to set them forth that we proceed in this way'. The note is inserted in between the two anecdotes.

²⁰⁷ "Les circonstances de la vision de l'enfer comme celles de la révélation [of the anchorite and the used blanket] sont, du reste, assez semblables dans leurs expressions et tour de phrase." Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique', p. 255.

Connacht in the form of church legislation eliciting tributes.²⁰⁸ Grosjean suggests that the purification of Cluain Chaín may have been part of an intentional program of territorial expansion on the part of Clonmacnoise. It is probable that the annal record marks such expansion into Connacht, and if Grosjean's theory be accepted, this could provide a possible historical context for our text. His theory is especially fitting if one takes into account that the Annals also record a vision in Clonmacnoise a few years before: AU 785 (r. 786) *Visio terribilis in Cluain Mac Nois et poenitentia magna per totam Hiberniam*. What type of vision this refers to and who the visionary was remains tantalisingly uncertain, but we must at least consider the option that it refers to VL from our manuscript. However, since our text clearly states that it occurred in Connacht, one would have to presuppose that the location of the event in the annal was erroneously attributed to the mother house from which the text may have been disseminated, overlooking the fact that it took place miles from the actual monastery. Without further evidence, we can, unfortunately, not confirm this theory.

The toponymic evidence may provide some further clues. In his pending edition, John Carey revisits the possible location of 'Cluain Caín' and suggests that a reference to a 'Cluain Caín i nAchud' in the Book of Armagh and the *Féilire Óengusso* may be of interest. Following Edmund Hogan's identification of this 'Achud' as 'Achad Caín' or Achad Conaire (now Achonry in Sligo), he traces references to this place in Latin Life of Finnian of Clonard, where a 'amenus...locus' is granted to Finnian upon the conversion of a king named 'Caput Lupi', and the Irish Life of Finnian, where a church is founded in a field (*achad*) which is 'cæin' in a cognate version of this dedication.²⁰⁹ Though the Irish Life appears to identify this field as Achad Ablá (Aghowl in Wicklow), another of Finnian's foundations, the preceding paragraphs clearly indicate that we must place it in Corran in the territory of Luigne in Connacht.²¹⁰ This name in fact survives in the form of the Modern Irish townland name 'An Charrán' (Carraun) nearby Achonry, while the name 'Luigne' likely survives in the name of the barony of Leyny, Irish *Luine*.²¹¹ Unfortunately the name *Cluain Caín*, otherwise well attested as modern Clonkeen or Cloonkeen, does

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

²⁰⁹ Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'. The only two kings listed by the Irish cognate of this name, *Cenn Faeled*, are recorded in the genealogies of the Luigne of Connacht in the 8th century.

²¹⁰ 'Corunn i Crich Luighne'. Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.), *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 81

²¹¹ Fiontar Placenames Database.

not survive in the area at all.²¹² The semantic difference between *clúain* and *achad* is sufficiently small, however, to allow for the supposition that they may have been used interchangeably or may have substituted for one another. The survival of the well mentioned in the Irish Life in Achonry today as *Toberfinane*, as well as two churches named after the priest Nathí, the first priest of the site according to the Latin Life of Finnian, also confirm the identification of the location as Achonry.²¹³ In the same barony, moreover, a church named *Cell Luaithrinn* (now Killoran) is recorded as being associated with Luaithrinn, daughter of Colmán, who is also associated with *Achad Chorainn*, in the neighbouring barony of Corran.²¹⁴ This is significant in that it confirms the association of a Colmán with the area, as suggested by the Book of Armagh, which records the transfer of this site from Colmán to Patrick. The association of the site Achad Chonaire with Patrick in that text is confirmed, as Carey points out, by variant readings in a second recension of the Irish Life of Finnian.²¹⁵ Thus, we can say that it is plausible that the *Cluain Caín i nAchud* referred to in the Book of Armagh and the *Féilire* and the *achad caín* from the Lives of Finnian are indeed to be identified with Achonry. In addition there is a brief reference to a Colmán of 'Cluoin Cain', who sent his pupil Columba to *Clúain Iraird*.

Post hec traditus est puer cuidam uiro sancto, nomine Colmanus Cule, qui fundauit locum illum qui dicitur Cluoin Cuin²¹⁶ et ipse enutriuit eum, et apud illum psalmos ymnosque legit. Cum autem puer Columba creuisset et factus esset iuuenis, perrexit ad sanctum Finianum, episcopus Cluana h-Iraird, et legit apud illum et fuit unus de scola illa sancta.²¹⁷

We cannot be entirely certain that this concerns the same place, but placed against the context above it is certainly plausible, and would confirm relations between the

²¹² The closest attestations are in North-West Roscommon and North-East Galway, as well as on the northern coast of Sligo.

²¹³ Ordinance Survey Historical Map of Achonry, consulted online at <<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V1,557203,814415,7,9>>.

²¹⁴ MacShamhráin, A., et al., *Monasticon Hibernicum Project: Early Christian Ecclesiastical Settlement in Ireland 5th to 12th Centuries* (Dublin: DIAS, 2008), <monasticon.celt.dias.ie> s.v. 'Achad Chonaire' and 'Cell Luaithrinn'.

²¹⁵ Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'.

²¹⁶ MS. *ante corr.* cain.

²¹⁷ 'After this the boy is handed over to a certain holy man, named Colmán Cule, who founded that place called Cluain Cuin, and he himself reared him, and he read the psalms and hymns with him. When, however, the boy Columba grew up and had become a young man, he went to saint Finian, Bishop of Cluain Iraird, and read with him and was one of the followers of this holy man.' *Vita S. Columbae, abbatis de Tír dá Glas*; Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum*, p. 225.

two places. This context makes it indeed attractive to identify the *Cluain Caín* in *VL* with Achonry in Connacht as well. Carey's suggestion that the place 'Cluain' from which Laisrén departs is to be identified with Clonard (*Cluain Iraird*) rather than Clonmacnoise fits this identification. Grosjean may thus not have been altogether wrong in suggesting Laisrén's visit may have had something to do with expansionist tendencies, albeit not those of Clonmacnoise but of Clonard. Though we cannot with certainty favour either identification, it must be noted as significant that both scenarios suggest an historical context for the text in the late eighth or early ninth century,²¹⁸ which is also supported by Carey's recent dating of the text to the Old Irish period and "quite possibly as early as the eighth century".²¹⁹

The Vision of Laisrén and the Vita Fursei

Both Seymour and Boswell have previously remarked on the close relationship between *VL* and *VF*. Boswell commented that *VL* is in the style of *VF*, notably in the manner of revelation.²²⁰ Seymour summarised a number of parallels between the two texts, namely that

- i. the inanimate bodies of the visionaries are connected with a church;
- ii. both Fursa and Laisrén are transported by three angels of the celestial host, two of which carry the visionary up, while the third functions as guide and speaker;
- iii. both are met and accused by demons quoting scripture.²²¹

To these Carey adds that

- iv. neither see anything of the roof of the building they are in when they are taken up;
- v. in both texts the accuser quotes Matt. 18:3 and refers to the truth of scripture;
- vi. both visionaries, before entering the afterworld, behold the world as a gloomy valley;²²²

²¹⁸ See n. 209 for the two kings; the reference to the priest Nathí, traditionally the first priest of *Cluain Caín/Achad Chonaire*, in the *Félire* places the foundation of the site before the early ninth century.

²¹⁹ Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'.

²²⁰ Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 169.

²²¹ Seymour, *Irish Visions*, p. 23.

²²² Seymour thought this valley was part of the afterworld and was occupied by "those people of Ireland who had died in their sins". He surmised it might have been "the writer's love of his countrymen" which had "urged him to locate them in a region where they might experience the minimum of suffering" (Seymour, *Irish Visions*, pp. 22-3). Grosjean instead argued this scene represents 'a vision within a vision' (Grosjean, 'Notes d'hagiographie celtique', p. 256). Carey is of the opinion that the valley represents earth seen through heavenly eyes. The arguments for and against these interpretations will be discussed below in 4.2.2, p. 231.

- vii. both texts emphasize the importance of penance; and
- viii. in both texts the visionary is asked to preach what he has learned to others.²²³

Though there is some variance in the details, some sections of *VL* are close enough to *VF* to be considered paraphrases, and the identical sequence of elements in the texts suggest this is no coincidence. Moreover, the details in *VL* congruent to *VF* could not have been derived from the copy in Bede alone, which, for instance, does not quote the open roof or Matt. 18:3. Consequently, I would agree with Carey's observation that

There would seem, then, to be every reason to believe that the *Vita Fursaei* is the principal source at any rate for the opening of our 'Vision'—in others words, for most of that portion of it which survives.²²⁴

If this position is accepted, it provides us with a *terminus ante quem* for the availability of *VF* in Ireland of the late eighth or early ninth century.²²⁵

There are, however, also notable differences: the text would appear to have contained continuous dialogue between the angel and Laisrén while on a tour of the afterlife, beginning with a series of punishments. Fursa, on the other hand, does not go on a tour of hell and his conversation with the angel is relatively minimal; it is complemented later in the text with a monologue attributed to Beoán and Meldán. Furthermore, the dialogue between the angel and the demon in *VL* is much shorter than in *VF*. The setting for the visions is also different and Laisrén's role as messenger is sketched out much more clearly from the beginning. That said, *VL* is fragmentary and we have too little evidence to positively identify what it may have contained or what other sources the author may have used.

2.3 *Visio Sancti Pauli*: Redactions VI and XI

2.3.1 Introduction to the *Visio Sancti Pauli*

The *Visio Sancti Pauli* or *Apocalypse of Paul*,²²⁶ a text already mentioned a number of times, is arguably the single most influential text for the genre of vision literature

²²³ Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén'. Indeed, Fursa is told to preach to the rulers and priests of Ireland; Laisrén to his fellows.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Assuming, of course, that *VL* was written in Ireland—I know of no reason to suggest otherwise.

²²⁶ The title *Visio Sancti Pauli* is often used to refer specifically to the Latin versions of the text, whereas the title *Apocalypse of Paul* is normally used for the earlier Greek text or for the text in

in the Christian West, and is, as mentioned, the source for the Redactions. It therefore deserves a brief introduction of its own, so that the Redactions here discussed may be better understood and its importance better appreciated. The text purports to describe a vision of St. Paul in which he sees the going-out of souls and the punishments of sinners, for whom his prayers obtain some respite. The text was likely the result of speculation regarding his famous comments in 2 Cor 12 that he was taken up to the third heaven, where he heard 'things unutterable'. Paul himself is not known to have divulged these unutterable things, leading to the *Visio*'s widespread rejection among ecclesiastical scholars and authorities.²²⁷ Nevertheless, his statement sparked one of the most popular and long-standing literary productions of the medieval period. The *Apocalypse of Paul* was first written in Greek and in Egypt,²²⁸ where it was evidently known in the middle of the third century, though it could have been written even as much as eighty years earlier.²²⁹ It was fitted with a new introduction in the early fifth century,²³⁰ possibly in Asia Minor. This adds that the text was discovered in Tarsus after Paul revealed in a dream that it was hidden under the floorboards of the house where he used to live. Consequently we speak of 'Pre-Tarsus' and the 'Tarsus' editions of the text. The text was subsequently translated from Greek into other languages, including Coptic, Syriac and Church Slavonic, as well as Latin.²³¹

The Latin translation probably dates to some time between the middle of the fifth and the early sixth century.²³² We now refer to this translation as the 'Long Latin' text. Three variants of it are known, of which *L*¹ is the oldest and considered

general (including all language versions). For the sake of clarity, I would like to repeat here that the term 'Redactions' refers generally to the medieval derivatives of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*. In addition, the term *Visio Pauli* is used by Jiroušková to indicate the form of the text represented by these Redactions. Further distinctions are described where relevant.

²²⁷ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 3. Such critics include Sozomen, Augustine as well as, at a later date, Aldhelm and Alcuin.

²²⁸ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 7, more cautiously, writes "Sicher ist jedenfalls, daß der Ursprung der *Paulus-Apokalypse* im Oströmischen Reich zu suchen ist."

²²⁹ Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, pp. 11, 18-9; Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 8-9.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* and Silverstein, 'The Date of the *Apocalypse of Paul*'. Traditionally it was held that the introduction dates the event to 388 AD, but that date now appears to be the result of a misreading of the consular formula quoted in the text, which correctly points to the time of Theodosius II (408-50 AD).

²³¹ See *ANT*, pp. 617-9 for reference to the text in other languages. See Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 6, 11-13. The only surviving Coptic translation of the text is the only translation to preserve the Pre-Tarsus edition, however it also contains a continuation not found in the other texts. The Syriac translation is unique in that it moves the Tarsus introduction to the end of the text and provides a new introduction.

²³² Thus Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 12.

the most representative of the Greek.²³³ This version was known in Gaul by the middle of the sixth century, where it was quoted by Caesarius of Arles²³⁴ and is the version behind most if not all of the later medieval vision texts. The two most representative manuscript copies of *L*¹ are those in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Nouv. acq. lat. 1631, foll. 2vb-25vb (*P*) and St. Gall, Kantonsbibliothek, Vadianische Sammlung, MS 317, foll. 56-68 (*StG*^L), both dated to the ninth century.²³⁵ The second version, *L*², which lacks the Tarsus introduction, appears to have been less influential, but was versified in German in the twelfth century.²³⁶ A third version, *L*³, is much like *L*¹ but lacks the Tarsus introduction as well as the final section containing Paul's visit to Paradise—a feature which it shares with *StG*^L.²³⁷ It is significantly expanded in the section on the going-out of the soul, a theme which was very popular in the Middle Ages and produced a variety of related works. Another notable difference between the three versions is that *L*¹ and *L*³, like the original Greek, are written in the first person, but *L*² is written in third person, as are most of the medieval Redactions.²³⁸ However, recently new fragments of the text in Coptic came to light which recount the vision in the third person. The fragments are dated to the sixth or seventh century by Alin Suciu, making them not only the oldest witnesses to the work, but also pushing the switch to a third person account of the text, previously traced back only as far as the ninth century, back by three centuries

²³³ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 6. In 1935, commenting on the Paris manuscript, the oldest surviving Latin copy, Silverstein already wrote that this translation was written “not later than the beginning of the sixth, and perhaps as early as the last years of the fourth century, not long before Augustine's condemnation”. The only surviving Greek copy is a much abbreviated form. It was published in Tischendorf, C., *Apocalypses Apocryphae* (Leipzig: H. Mendelssohn, 1886), see pp. xiv-xviii and 34-69.

²³⁴ Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 12.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 20 n. 8-13, 24, 37 n. 5 (*P*) and 11, 28 (*StG*^L). As discussed by Hilhorst and Silverstein, various scholars have, however, proposed dates for *P* ranging from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. The manuscript is dated to the ninth century on codicological and palaeographical grounds.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13. The texts of this recension are known as the Graz and Zurich manuscripts. See Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, pp. 169-208 and Silverstein, 'The Graz and Zurich Apocalypse'. Note that Silverstein holds that *L*² is a separate translation derived from a Greek text, while Piovanelli, P., 'Les origines de l'Apocalypse de Paul reconsiderées', *Apocrypha* 4 (1993) 25-64 argues that it is derived from *L*¹.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13. All relevant manuscripts are discussed in detail in Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, pp. 23-39. The Arnhem text (*L*³) is printed side by side with *P*, *StG*^L and a third witness (Escorial) on pp. 65-162. *L*² is printed separately. Cf. Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 5-15 and p. 29 for the manuscripts. Note that Jiroušková appears to place the Escorial manuscript, which, according to Silverstein and Hilhorst (p. 12) is an abbreviated version of *L*¹, in the *L*³ category.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-7. *Red. XI* is also written in the first person, but the scribe regularly writes the third person in error. This raises the question whether he was also aware of a third person version of the text in addition to his exemplar, which must have been in the first person.

and opening up the possibility that there may have been an early Greek text in the third person.²³⁹

The standard reference text is still generally the copy of L^1 from P ,²⁴⁰ of which I provide a point a point by summary to give an indication of the contents. The text counts 51 paragraphs, divided into seven sections by subject:

- 1-2 Discovery of the vision
- 3-6 Appeal of Creation to God against sinful man
- 7-10 Reports of the angels to God about man
- 11-18 Death and judgement of the righteous and the wicked
- 19-30 Paul's vision of paradise
- 31-44 Paul's vision of hell and the rest on Sundays for the damned obtained by Paul
- 45-51 Second vision of paradise²⁴¹

Once the text spread through Western Europe it developed into a number of 'Redactions', each in greater or lesser degree derived from the Long Latin texts. The Redactions were numbered as they were discovered, so that traditionally we speak of Redactions I-XI, though their names do not reflect their relationship to one another. Brandes and Silverstein were among the first to publish substantial examples of these Redactions and Silverstein was the first to attempt to unravel the complicated relationships between the different versions.²⁴² Silverstein observed that Redactions I-V, VII and VIII all shared such features as replacing the Tarsus prologue with "an interpolated exhortation that transforms the Apocalypse into a homily" and turning the unnamed angel of *VSP* into the archangel Michael.²⁴³ He noticed connections between Redactions I-II and IV-VII and identified many of the characteristic motifs which represent innovations vis-à-vis *VSP*, such as a description of a dragon-like monster; souls hanging on burning trees; infernal rivers and enumeration of the torments; a furnace with flames of different colours; a fiery wheel; and a bridge to hell. It further became obvious that all of the Redactions deal almost exclusively with the regions of the damned and are particularly concerned with the Sunday respite of

²³⁹ Suci, A., 'Preliminary Report on Some New Coptic Apocryphal Fragments', Paper Delivered at the *Réunion Annuelle de l'Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne (AELAC)* (Dole, 2012).

²⁴⁰ This text was first edited by M.R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota: A Collection of Thirteen Apocryphal Books and Fragments*, Texts and Studies 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), pp. 1-42, but has now now been superseded by the revised edition of Silverstein and Hilhorst. For the translation see *ANT*, pp. 616-44.

²⁴¹ Note that StG^L and L^3 break off after §44.

²⁴² Brandes, *Visio S. Pauli*; Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*.

²⁴³ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 40.

the damned.²⁴⁴ In fact, none of the Redactions contain material past the respite section of *VSP*, omitting all reference to §§45-51. Because these omissions show similarity with the text in *StG^L*, Silverstein postulated that the Redactions were derived of a now lost text λ , lying behind *StG^L*, from which descended Redaction VI (*Red. VI*) and a text α , which in turn gave rise to the other Redactions.²⁴⁵ *Red. VI*, and the later discovered Redaction XI (*Red. XI*),²⁴⁶ both proved to be rather unique in their adaptation of *VSP*.

A new study by Lenka Jiroušková recently proposed a revision of the relationship and development of the Redactions.²⁴⁷ Having collected all known manuscripts of the Redactions (termed ‘Hölle-fassungen’), she presents a synoptic edition and accompanying study in which she demonstrates that the majority of the copies of the Redactions fall into three separate groups, each with their own subgroups according to manuscript variation. The three groups (referred to as recensions hereafter) each have a characteristic combination of scenes adapted from *VSP*²⁴⁸ and innovations (or interpolations) and are named after their opening formula: A “oportet nos”, B “interrogandum est”, C “dies dominicus”.

Recension A is closest to *VSP*, though it is based solely on the section on hell, and has relatively few innovative motifs: these include primarily the River Oceanus, which circles the world; a fiery river often called ‘Cogiton’ and its drops of fire; and the dragon-like creature eating sinners. Jiroušková sees some influence here from Hellenistic representations of the Netherworld. The earliest copies of this group date to the eleventh century, though most date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with a provenance in Northern France and Lotharingia.²⁴⁹

Recension B is based on various sections of *VSP* and contains a combination of innovations also found in A and C, while simultaneously also leaving out others. For instance, it combines elements from the opening formulae of both A and C and it

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chapters four and five. Silverstein (p. 79-80) points out that *VSP* is less explicitly concerned with a weekly respite and that the change of emphasis must be placed in the context of the growing popularity of Sunday as the Lord’s Day in Western Europe.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁴⁶ Dwyer, M. E. (ed. and trans.) ‘An Unstudied Redaction of the *Visio Pauli*’, *Manuscripta* 32 (1988) 121-38.

²⁴⁷ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli* (2006).

²⁴⁸ I will not discuss the finer details of these adaptations or the subgroups here. The reader may consult pp. 295-303 and chapter three in Jiroušková respectively. It is noteworthy, however, that many of the adaptations to scenes consists of added comparative statements.

²⁴⁹ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 175-8, 483, 486-7, 490-1.

combines the scene with the fiery trees and the fiery furnace (C) with the dragon-like creature (A), in addition to modifying details of other scenes. Like C, it also recasts certain sections into dialogue. Jiroušková sees influence here from the apocalyptic tradition, and especially *Revelation*. Though the earliest manuscript copy dates to the twelfth century, this group reaches its peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, with a provenance in German-speaking areas.²⁵⁰

Recension C is particularly concerned with Sunday, as is evident from its opening formula. This group shares no characteristic motifs with A and those it shares with B tend to be executed differently. Typical innovations in this recension include: the combination of formulae concerning hell, the fiery wheel and a fiery, beast-filled river with a bridge—a motif borrowed from Gregory the Great;²⁵¹ a lament by the apostles; women covered in pitch and sulphur who committed abortion or lost their virginity;²⁵² a scene with a sinful old man; a dialogue concerning the number of punishments; and a closing summons to convert. The oldest witness in this group dates to tenth- or eleventh-century France, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries its provenance is, broadly speaking, the Anglo-Norman realm. A sub-group of these manuscripts appears to have a more specific provenance in Catalonia, England and Ireland in the fifteenth century.²⁵³ According to Jiroušková the three groups are not interdependent, but rather exist as parallel versions. The existence of contemporaneous mixed versions, the earliest dating to the eleventh century, corroborates this.²⁵⁴

The texts normally referred to as *Red. VI* and *XI*, however, fall outside the categories so established. Because they retain elements of the description of Paradise in addition to the scenes of hell, Silverstein had already identified *Red. VI* as a ‘stand-alone’ text, while *Red. XI* was tentatively grouped with the other Redactions. However, according to Jiroušková they do not belong to the ‘Hölle-fassungen’

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-84, 484-7, 491. One of the subgroups in B has a particular connection with the ‘Heavenly Letter’ motif.

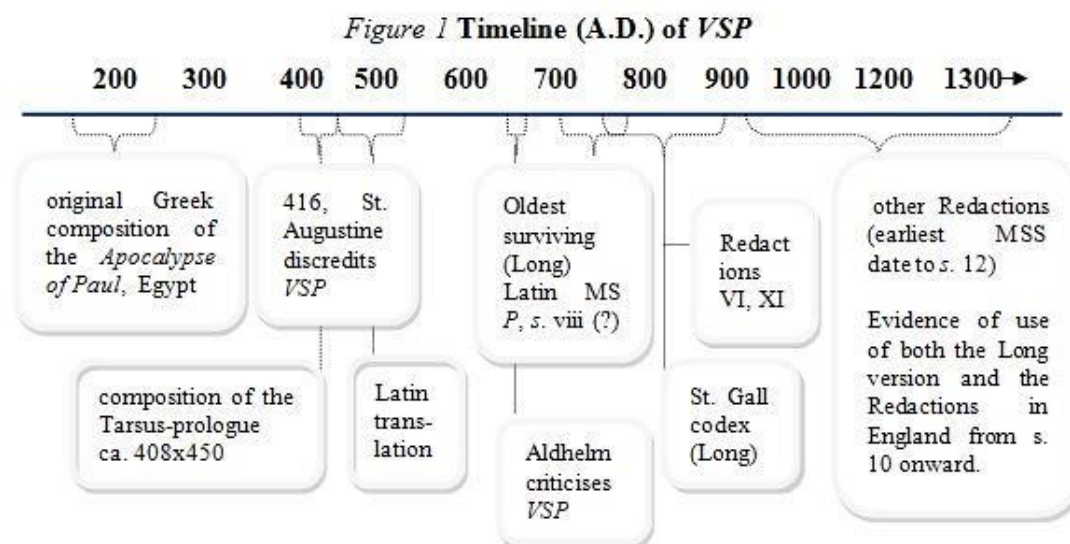
²⁵¹ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 78-9, demonstrates that the references to the various dwellings near the bridge and to Matt. 13:30 in relation to different groups of sinners are taken directly from *Dial. IV.35-6*.

²⁵² A combination of two scenes (22 and 25) in A and B.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 184-190, 485-7, 491. This group is by far the largest and contains complex subgroups not here discussed. Given that Jiroušková takes *Red. VI* and *Red. XI* to represent a separate tradition, unrelated to the main recensions of the ‘Hölle-fassungen’, she considers this group (C) to represent the oldest tradition of the Redactions.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 343, 490. She leaves open the question whether the three recensions ultimately go back to one exemplar (either a Long Latin text or an earlier Redaction).

proper, but rather represent ‘Übergangsfassungen’, because they contain both elements shared with the Redactions and elements unique in the context of the entire tradition of *VSP*. In addition, she identifies no dependency on the ‘Übergangsfassungen’ on the part of the Redactions.²⁵⁵



2.3.2 Redaction VI

*Summary*²⁵⁶

Paul was taken to the Kingdom of God to see the works of the just and the punishments of sinners. In each location he asked the angel to explain what place he was in. In the first heaven he saw a fruit-bearing tree where the just and the innocent will live (§1). Next he saw men and women bound by fiery chains; they did [not honour] their parents or do penance (§2). In another place he saw men and women who gave false testimony with their tongues out, jaws pierced and boiling eyes (§3). In another place he saw godfathers and -mothers who failed in their duties in fire and under tar, tortured by their spiritual children (§4). In another place he saw men boiling in punishments under lead and pitch, wearing burning, leaden clothing; these were merciless, unchaste and uncharitable bishops and priests who swore false oaths and judged bad judgements (§5). In another place he saw clergy submerged in lead to various degrees; they had broken their vow of chastity, vomited the host(?), sworn falsely and committed theft(?). Paul asks the angel how to make amends for loss of chastity and the angel advises to do penance while alive; for sinful clergy he recommends prostration and fasting (§6). In another place he saw crop-destroyers in fiery woollen garments (§7). In another place he saw horse-thieves riding leaden quadrupeds (§8). In another place he saw thieves of iron tools thrusting burning ironwork into their eyes (§9). In another place he saw a heaven full of wealth (?) for slanderers and torturers (§10). Then Paul asked where his

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 277-83. As mentioned earlier, because Jiroušková does not provide new separate titles I will continue to refer to the texts described in the next sections as *Red. VI* and *XI*.

²⁵⁶ See Appendix E for notes on various problematic readings in the text.

relatives and his extended family are and learns they are burning in hell. When he begins to weep bitterly, Raphael asks him why. Paul then asks that he may enter hell to be with them or that they be pardoned.²⁵⁷ God grant him this and his parents are released from hell (§11).

Text and discussion

Of the three manuscripts in which *Red. VI* is preserved, St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 682 (*StG¹*), pp. 193-204 contains the only complete copy. The manuscript is dated to the ninth century, with a provenance in Germany, possibly in the Fulda region; and it shows signs of being copied from a Merovingian exemplar.²⁵⁸ Two other manuscripts contain fragmentary copies. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 216, f. 126v (*V²*) contains only the first three paragraphs. The relevant section of the manuscript is dated to the eighth century and has a provenance in Reims or Lorsch. The copy in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek (Bibliotheca Albertina), MS 1608, ff. 5r-6v (*Le*) has only the first five paragraphs. It is preserved not in an integral codex but as part of a collection of fragments. *Le* is dated to the ninth or tenth century but is of unknown provenance.²⁵⁹ Since to date no translation of the text has been published, I provide a tentative translation in Appendix E to facilitate discussion of the text.

Red. VI represents both an abridgement and a rewriting of *VSP*. Unlike the other Redactions, however, it does not substitute ‘Michael’ for ‘angel’, nor does it have the homiletic prologue or the going-out of the souls section. It preserves the briefest possible account of the Land of Promise, from which it moves to descriptions of the punishments without any noticeable change of scene. *Red. VI* also replaces the conclusion: the angel Raphael—not Michael—appears and Paul asks for respite for his relatives—instead of sinners in general, who are then taken out of hell by camels. No mention is made of Sunday. In fact, Jiroušková observes that only the opening formula, the scene with the tree, the scene describing men and women chained and the unchaste clerics have any affiliation with *VSP* and thus, like Silverstein, concludes that this Redaction is no ‘Bindeglied’ between *VSP* and the other Redactions, but an independent rewriting.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ See the discussion of this passage in 3.1.3.

²⁵⁸ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 214.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-42.

²⁶⁰ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 281-3; Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 82; Cf. Dumville, ‘Towards’, p. 69.

Silverstein had previously discussed the unique innovations in this work and demonstrated that parallels for most of these interpolations can be found in certain Irish texts. The first of these is §3 on the false witnesses, who are pierced by flaming nails. Silverstein points to parallels in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, VL, FA and a copy of the *Transitus Mariae*, though there are significant differences in all of these cases.²⁶¹ The punishment of neglectful godparents (§4) has precedents in punishments of parents in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and other apocalyptic texts, but more closely resembles scenes in the *Transitus Mariae* and FA §47.²⁶² The punishment for horse-thieves (§8), who are made to ride fiery, leaden animals, has parallels in the vision of a Cistercian novice, in *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* and in *Cáin Domnaig*.²⁶³ The scene with people in flaming robes (§7) was taken by Silverstein to refer to sorcerers as in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, but Carozzi argues more convincingly that this scene relates to crop-failure. The fiery clothing has a parallel in FA §47.²⁶⁴

All of these connections led David Dumville to conclude that *Red. VI* “was composed, if not in Ireland, at any rate in an Irish continental centre retaining the closest links with the home culture”.²⁶⁵ He also observes that the style is reminiscent of Old Irish tales. Additional evidence in support of these contentions was recently adduced by Donnchadh Ó Corráin. He argues that the crucial evidence is provided by the last passage, which describes Paul’s questions about his family. In his opinion, certain phrases in that passage, such as *amici mei*, *parenticula mea* and in particular the phrase *parentes tuos usque ad nono genculo* are hibernicisms, with the latter reflecting the Old Irish legal expression *co nomad n-ó*.²⁶⁶ On the other hand, Carozzi, drawing on evidence from penitentials, laws and councils, argues that the text also fits in a Merovingian context, and places it in the middle of the eighth century. Because he sees parallels with the *Penitential of Egbert*, he suggests a missionary

²⁶¹ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 82-3; Ó Corráin, 'Can We Prove'. The Irish texts tend to attribute the punishment to more than one kind of sinner. Note that my paragraph numbering is slightly different from Silverstein’s.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 84; Ó Corráin, 'Can We Prove'.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 86. However, in the first case the sinner has stolen a she-goat; our text is closer to the example of ICC, where, however, as in *Cáin Domnaig*, the motif is closely related to the Sunday observance.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85-6. Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 272; Ó Corráin, 'Can We Prove'.

²⁶⁵ Dumville, 'Towards', p. 70.

²⁶⁶ Ó Corráin, 'Can we prove', handout. He refers to Baumgarten, R., 'Co nómad n-ó: an early Irish socio-legal timescale', *Peritia* 17-8 (2003-4) 338-56. Cf. Dumville, 'Towards', p. 70 hints that this feature might be Irish, but provides no further details.

environment, which would suit a provenance in southern Germany.²⁶⁷ In addition, he does not observe anything in the text which would require an appeal to Irish sources to justify its existence and reasons that, if such were indeed the case, it must be the consequence of Irish influence on the Anglo-Saxon milieu.²⁶⁸ Whilst a digression via Anglo-Saxon sources seems to me uncalled for,²⁶⁹ it seems not impossible that the text was written in a Merovingian locality with Irish ties, by an itinerant Irishman abroad or, alternatively, that a version of the text reached Ireland shortly after its composition. Future research will have to determine which may be the case.

2.3.3 *Redaction XI*

Summary

Paul was taken up to the third heaven in a golden boat (§1). He saw the Son of God at the hand of the Father and a great city with twelve walls and towers, with the altar of God in its centre. There he saw the Son of Man; he praised the Father and a throng of holy people responded ‘Alleluia’ (§2). He saw trees before the gates of paradise with people in them; they were those who did not give alms (§3). He saw trees around a river of fire with beasts in it and he was afraid. The angel then took him to show him the punishments of the wicked (§4). In a fiery river men and women were submerged to various levels. Paul asked who they were and the angel explains each scene. Those who did not enter the Church were submerged to their knees; fornicators to the navel; those who did not obey Scripture to their lips; and those who were ‘neither hot nor cold’ up to their hair (§5). Paul wept and the angel rebuked him (§6). He saw an ancient person thrown into a furnace; he was a merciless bishop who did not observe the virtues or perform his vigils or fasts (§7). He saw devils throw a virgin into the furnace; she falsely wore the garments of salvation, but did not observe the virtues or perform vigils or fasts (§8). He saw five virgins in Paradise who were like the sun, in garments white as snow, so that he could not look at them. They had books in their hands and recited *Holy Holy Holy* [the *Te Deum*]. They were the five brides of Christ who observed the virtues (§9). The angel showed him the place of the Saints. He saw at the entrance of paradise a tablet with the names of the saints on it. He saw twelve golden walls and four rivers of oil, wine, milk and honey, and 3,000 infants near the river of milk as well as three trees bearing a hundred times as much fruit as twelve trees would bear. The saints will dwell here until the Resurrection and the gates will be closed until the Day of Judgement (§11). The angel then showed him the punishment of the wicked. He saw five virgins in a furnace up to their hairs; the Lord cannot hear their voice and they were black as Tartarus and were being tortured by animals. They were virgins who clothed themselves in the garment of holy Christ and did not observe the virtues or perform vigils or fasts (§11).

²⁶⁷ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, pp. 270-6.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

²⁶⁹ There were, of course, plenty of Irish exiles on the continent as well in this period.

Text and discussion

This text was first discovered and printed by Mary E. Dwyer, but a new edition and translation by Tomás O’Sullivan is currently in press.²⁷⁰ Both provide a discussion of the text, so I will limit myself to the most important facts. The text survives in a single manuscript: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 220, ff. 56r-60r. This manuscript dates to the ninth century; it was written by an Anglo-Saxon scribe along the Middle or Upper Rhine and has strong Insular affiliations.²⁷¹ Charles Wright has demonstrated that *Red. XI* itself contains ‘Irish symptoms’, most significantly a quotation from the Irish version of the hymn *Te Deum*, and suggests it was compiled “by an Irish monk or nun, probably on the Continent”.²⁷² The work betrays a particular interest in virgins and may have been composed specifically for a house of nuns.²⁷³ *Red. XI* is well-known for its unique combination of the scene with the trees with the Hanging Sinners and the beast-filled river of hell, for which parallels may be found in Old English literature.²⁷⁴ O’Sullivan further identifies a preoccupation with the virtues, and in particular with mercy, as well as some hints that the punishment ought to be understood as purgatorial as opposed to eternal.²⁷⁵

2.4 *Fís Adomnáin*

Summary

The work opens with an exordium in praise of the Creator, introducing the theme of the ‘meek’ and the ‘pitiless’ from Ps 146:5-6. The author then proceeds with three examples of earlier visionaries, before announcing that Adomnán was given a vision on the day of John the Baptist in which an angel took him to see heaven and hell. There follows, first, a description of the heavenly regions, including the land of saints and near it, behind a veil, the household of heaven in which the patriarchs and prophets and Mary reside. There, too, is the throne of the Creator, surrounded by three zones. There are angels ministering to him, and three birds sing the offices with angels responding. The Lord is indescribable, but appears brighter than the sun. The throne is in a city with crystalline walls encircling it. Those who cannot go there exist in hills and bogs until Judgement Day. They are separated from the city by crashing veils of fire and ice; their noise is fearful, but on the side of the heavenly

²⁷⁰ Dwyer, ‘An Unstudied Redaction’; O’Sullivan, ‘Redaction XI’.

²⁷¹ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 142; O’Sullivan, *op. cit.* The contents of the manuscript include a copy of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, a text on the ‘Seven Steps’ by which one may ascend to heaven, and—significantly, in the context of the Redactions—a Sunday Catechesis. For its insular characteristics: Wright, ‘Some Evidence’.

²⁷² Wright, ‘Some Evidence’, p. 37; and the discussion by O’Sullivan, *op. cit.*

²⁷³ Dwyer, ‘An Unstudied Redaction’, pp. 125-9; Wright, ‘Some Evidence’, pp. 37-8; O’Sullivan, *op. cit.*

²⁷⁴ Wright, C.D., *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* vol. 6, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), pp. 110-36; O’Sullivan, *op. cit.*

²⁷⁵ O’Sullivan, *op. cit.*

household it is as sweet as music. The next section describes the ascent of the soul through seven heavens, in which the sinful are punished, but through which the righteous pass in the blink of an eye. Michael and the angel of the Trinity bring the soul to the Creator for judgement. If it is found sinful, it is handed down to Lucifer. Next the guardian angel shows Adomnán the lowest hell with its punishments and tortures. There is a bridge over a fiery river, which becomes increasingly easier for the righteous, but more difficult for sinners, so that they fall off it. Various scenes of tortures follow, including a ‘strand of eternal punishment’; troops fettered to fiery pillars; troops standing in fiery showers, being chewed on by dogs; and many others. Beyond this land there is a wall of fire, behind which is a region seven times more horrible, but which souls do not inhabit until Judgement Day. A brief description of that land then follows before Adomnán is transported back, through the land of saints, into his body and commanded to preach concerning his vision. The text rounds off with a peroration placing Adomnán in a long line of preachers (to kings especially), also including a brief account of Elijah preaching beneath the Tree of Life concerning Judgement Day.

Text and discussion

With its vivid imagery and complex history, *Fís Adomnáin* (hereafter *FA*) has probably captured scholars’ imagination more than any other Irish vision text. The fact that we know so little about the origin of the text has only added to its mysterious character. We owe the first modern edition and translation of *FA* to Whitley Stokes, who published the text from the oldest known manuscript copy, *Leabhar na hUidre*, Dublin, RIA MS 23 E 25 [1229] pp. 27a-31b (*LU*, ca. s. 12ⁱⁿ), in 1870.²⁷⁶ Ernst Windisch’s dual edition of *LU* and the *Leabhar Breac*, Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 16 [1230] pp. 253b-256a (*B*, s. 15ⁱⁿ), and Joseph Vendryes’ edition and translation of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Nouv. acq. lat. 1631 fols. 95rb-98vb (*Q*, s. 16ⁱⁿ) followed not long after.²⁷⁷ Boswell’s book-length study of the text and related material appeared around the same time, including also a translation of the *LU* copy.²⁷⁸ The variation between the different manuscript versions led to much speculation concerning the text’s structure and original form. Boswell,²⁷⁹ and after him Seymour,²⁸⁰ both considered the text to be composite and inconsistent, and

²⁷⁶ Stokes, *Fís Adamnáin: Slicht Libair na Huidre*.

²⁷⁷ Windisch, E. (ed.), *Fís Adamnáin. Die Vision* (1880), prints *B* side by side with a reprint of Stokes’s *LU*; and Vendryes, J. (ed. and trans.), *Aislingthi Adhamnáin* (1908).

²⁷⁸ Translations of *B* did not appear until much later: Stifter, D. (trans.), *Fís Adamnáin: Die Vision des Adamnáin*, *Brennos: Studia Celtica Austriaca* 2 (1996) 20-8; Carey, *King of Mysteries* (1998), pp. 161-74.

²⁷⁹ Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, pp. 176-80.

²⁸⁰ Seymour, ‘The Vision of Adamnan’ and *Irish Visions*, esp. pp. 24-5. Though he notes in *Irish Visions* (p. 13) that he changed his opinion since his article regarding the second part of the *Vision of Adamnán* (designated by him as *Ad. II*), which he now believed “to be an *early* vision descriptive of

attempted to identify original and interpolated sections. This approach was only challenged by Dumville nearly half a century later, in the context of an examination of the sources used in *FA*. He pointed out the dangers inherent in Seymour's proposal to excise large portions of the text on the basis of an unproven reconstruction of Irish eschatological thought, and argued instead for its essential unity.²⁸¹ I have recently summarised the arguments and reviewed the structure of the text elsewhere.²⁸² In his forthcoming full critical edition of the text,²⁸³ John Carey affirms the internal coherence of the text as well as the suggestion, first made by Windisch and subsequently by Dumville, that *B* is in important ways a more conservative witness than *LU*.²⁸⁴ The text is preserved completely or nearly so in four manuscripts, *B*, *LU*, *Q* and Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 O 48 a-b [476] vol. I, fols. 17vb-20va (*Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, hereafter *F*, c. 1440 AD). The most notable difference between these witnesses is that *B* contains a macaronic exordium drawing on a Latin text mostly translated in the Irish, whereas *LU* omits the Latin here but retains the translations and adds an additional paragraph to the end of the text. *Q* omits §1 and summarises §2. Carey's analysis shows that *LU* is closer to *Q* and *B* is closer to *F*. In addition, a fragment is included in the work known as *Echtra Chléirech Coluim Chille*, where it is adapted as if it were part of the characters' itinerary,²⁸⁵ and a copy of the conclusion has been preserved in the copies of the vernacular *Life of Brendan*. All quotations in this study are from John Carey's forthcoming edition, to which I refer the reader for a fuller introduction.

2.5 The *Second Vision of Adomnán*

The text known as the *Second Vision of Adomnán* is an early eleventh century homily which attributes to Adomnán of Iona a vision in which he was given a warning for the Irish people. For a discussion of this text, the reader may consult the extended introduction accompanying my edition in Appendix A below.

hell, and not a description of Purgatory tacked on as an appendix to *Adamnán*", he nonetheless still argued it was a later addition to the text.

²⁸¹ Dumville, 'Towards', esp. pp. 63-5, 76-7.

²⁸² Volmering, N.J.B., 'De Struktuur van *Fís Adomnáin*', *Kelten: Mededelingen van de Stichting AG van Hamel voor Keltische Studies* 56 (2013) 5-8.

²⁸³ To appear as Carey, J. (ed. and trans.), '*Fís Adomnáin*', in McNamara, M., *et al.*, *Apocrypha Hiberniae II: Apocalyptic 2*, CCSA (forthcoming).

²⁸⁴ Carey, *op. cit.*; Windisch, '*Fís Adamnán*. Die Vision', p. 125; cf. Dumville, 'Towards', p. 66.

²⁸⁵ Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.), 'The Adventure of St. Columba's Clerics', *RC* 26 (1905) 130-70. The text preserves versions of §§11-24, 26-7, 30-8, 41, 44-8 and 54.

2.6 The Vision of Lóchán

Summary and text

This vision forms part of the work *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, which recounts the story of three brothers, the sons of a couple, Conall Ua Corra and Caerdeg. The couple did not have children as they all died after birth, so they decided to fast against the Devil in order to obtain an heir. As a result of that pact triplets were born, named Éinne, Lóchán and Silvester. When the triplets learn the story of their origin they dedicate themselves to the Devil and set out to plunder, rob churches and kill clerics throughout Connacht. One night they realise they have not yet destroyed the church of their grandfather, the *airchinnech* of Clogher. The cleric, however, surmising what they have planned, serves them food and alcohol so that they fall asleep. This is when Lóchán has his vision. The relevant section is brief enough to reproduce from Stokes' edition (§§13-4, pp. 30, 32, from the *Book of Fermoy*) here:

13. Is annsin rothuit a thoirrthim suain ⁊ codalta ar Lóchán gu tarfas fis amra dho .i. a breith d'feghadh nimhe ⁊ ifirn, ⁊ romuscail annsein. Romusculadar an dias ele dono ⁊ adubradar: “Éirgim,” ar séad,²⁸⁶ “d'argain ⁊ do milled an baile.”

14. “Doigh lem,” ar Lóchán, “ní he sin ní is cora dhún do dénumh. Uair olc an tigerna dar' fhognumar,” ar se, “ocus maith an tigerna ar a ndernsam fogal ⁊ diberce custratsa.^{286b} Ocus atconnarcsa aislingi granda adhuathmar .i. mu breith d'feghadh nimhe ⁊ ithfírn, ait i mboi imut pian ar drongaibh^{286c} ⁊ ar demnuibh. Rochonnac tra cetre srotha an ifirn .i. sruth loiscenn ⁊ sruth naithrech ⁊ sruth teneadh ⁊ sruth snechta. Atconnarc best an ifirn gu n-imut cenn ⁊ cos fuirri, ⁊ rogebdaís fir domhain bas dia faicsin. Roconnarc iarsin mu breith do dhegadh nimhe, ⁊ roconnarc in Coimdhí fesin 'na ríghshuidhí^{286d} ⁊ enlaith aingel ac oirfidedh do. Roconnac tra en edrocht, ⁊ ba binne na gach ceol a canad. Michel immorro is e bhái a richt an eoin i fiadhnusi an Duileman. As i mu comairli-si daib,” ar Lóchán, “bur n-airm do tregadh^{286e} ⁊ Dia do lenmain budeasta.”

13. Then a deep slumber and sleep fell upon Lóchán, and a marvellous vision was shewn to him, to wit, he was taken to see heaven and hell. And then he awoke. The other two also awoke and said: “Let us go”, say they, “to wreck and destroy the stead.” 14. “Meseems”, quoth Lóchán, “that is not what is meetest for us to do. For evil is the lord whom we have served, and good is the lord on whom we have hitherto wrought robbery and brigandage. And I beheld a vision hideous and awful, to wit, that I was borne away to see heaven and (also) hell, a place wherein were abundance of punishments on throngs of human souls and on devils. So I saw the four rivers of hell, even a river of toads and a river of serpents, a river of fire and a river of snow. I beheld the monster of hell with abundance of heads and feet upon it, and (all) the men of the world would die of seeing it. Thereafter I perceived that I was borne away to gaze at Heaven, and I beheld the Lord Himself on His throne, a birdflock of angels making music to Him. Then I saw a bright bird, and sweeter was his singing than every melody. Now this was Michael in the form of a bird in the presence of the Creator. This is my counsel to you”, says Lóchán, “to quit your weapons and in future to follow GOD.”²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ eirgeam, ar siad *M* ^{286b} foghail ⁊ díbhfeirg gusan trath so *M* ^{286c} add d'anmanaibh daoine *M*

^{286d} rígsuighi *F* ríghsuidhe *M* ^{286e} thréigen *M*

²⁸⁷ Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.) 'The Voyage of the Húi Corra', *RC* 14 (1893) 22-69, pp. 31-33.

Discussion

The text of *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* is a composite text which appears to consist of a voyage text and a younger introduction to it, in which the voyagers are identified as Lóchán, Énne and Silvester as above. Caoimhín Breatnach has argued that the authors would appear to have compiled it drawing on older material regarding a diabolic Conall Derg, his daughter Cairech Dergain and his saintly son Énne.²⁸⁸ The names Lóchán and Énne are listed together with the international saint Silvester in the *Félire Óengusso* under December 31, which may well have been the source for the names in the narrative. Breatnach dates this part of the text to the middle of the twelfth century. The linguistic evidence supports such a date, as well as his contention that the text consists of an earlier and a later stratum.²⁸⁹

The text is preserved mostly in early modern manuscripts and in at least two different versions. For this study I have used the oldest version of the text, that now preserved in the *Book of Fermoy*, Dublin, RIA MS 23 E 29 [1134], pp. 169–177 (*Fy*, s. xv). The later copies are contained in Dublin, RIA MS 23 M 50 [1008], pp. 187–200 (*M*, s. xviii), written at Carrignavar in 1744; and Dublin, RIA MS 23 H 28 [712], pp. 76–80 (*H^l*, s. xviii).²⁹⁰ The most reliable edition of this text is still that by Stokes.²⁹¹

2.7 Visio Tnugdali

Summary

The vision opens with a prologue in which the author, Marcus, addresses his patron and provides a date for the vision and an introduction in which he gives details about Ireland and the circumstances in which Tnugdali had his vision. As the vision commences, Tnugdali finds himself outside of his body, taunted by devils (§1), and meets his guardian angel, who takes him to see the rewards of the wicked (§2). Tnugdali is then taken to witness eight punishments, five of which (§§5–10) he is made to suffer himself. He is taken to the punishment of murderers, who are melted in a pit (§3); of the treacherous, who are tortured in sulphur and snow beside a mountain-path (§4); of the proud, who are made to cross a bridge over a stinking, horror-filled valley (§5); of the avaricious, who are devoured by and tortured inside the beast Acheron, which has the ancient heroes Fergus and Conall holding open its mouth (§6); of thieves, who are made to carry their spoils over a narrow bridge with

²⁸⁸ Breatnach, C., 'The Transmission and Structure of *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*', *Ériu* 53 (2003) 91–107, pp. 102–5.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 105–7.

²⁹⁰ See *ibid.* pp. 92–8 for a discussion of the manuscripts. He argues that *M* is a copy of *H*, which is in turn a copy of a text similar to *F*, but which may have been preserved in the *Book of Lismore*.

²⁹¹ The most recent edition is that by Anton G. van Hamel, *Immrama*, Medieval and Modern Irish Series 10 (Dublin: DIAS, 1941; repr. 2004), in which, however, he standardises the language.

iron nails, suspended over monsters (§7); of gluttons and fornicators, who are tortured in the house of Phristinus (§8); of fornicating religious and immoderate people, who are devoured by a beast in an icy lake, whose progeny they are then forced to gestate and give birth to (§9); and of those who accumulate sins, who are tortured in the forges of Vulcan (§10). As they descend into the lower hell, Tnugdál is overcome by fear and misery (§11). There he sees a square pit from which a flame shoots up souls and demons (§12), and in it the Prince of Darkness (§13). Walking out of the darkness, he and the angel arrive at a wall, which is the abode of the ‘not very wicked’, who suffer rain, wind, hunger and thirst (§14). Inside the wall, they arrive at the meadow of joy, where the fountain of life is—this is for the ‘not very good’ (§15). Close by are the kings Donnchad and Conchobar, who repented before death (§16); and king Cormac, who suffers punishment for three hours each day for the sins of adultery and oathbreaking (§17). They move upward to a wall of silver, inside of which are happy people singing in a scented meadow—this is the place for faithful spouses (§18). Moving up again, they come to a wall of gold, behind which Tnugdál sees the martyrs and the chaste in fine robes (§19). In an encampment of beautiful pavilions filled with exquisite music, monks and nuns reside in the presence of the Holy Trinity (§20). Under a verdant tree he sees men and women wearing crowns—they are protectors and builders of churches (§21). Tnugdál and the angel ascend a wall of precious stones and arrive at the heavenly host. From there they are able to see and contemplate all of existence (§22). Tnugdál is greeted by St. Rúadán (§23) and sees St. Patrick and four other Irish bishops. He is told he must return (§24) and is advised to mend his ways. After waking up he donates his belonging to the poor and preaches the word of God.

Text and discussion

This work was written in Regensburg in Southern Germany by the Irish monk Marcus. It appears to have been copied and distributed across southern Germany almost immediately after it was written, as well as translated into other vernaculars. We have a large number of surviving manuscripts testifying to its popularity, but for the purpose of this study I will only concern myself with the most representative version and not with the work’s later transmission.²⁹² The most widely used edition of the text is that by Adolf Wagner from 1882.²⁹³ At the time he counted 54 manuscripts witnesses to the *Visio Tnugdali* and published a critical edition based on seven manuscripts, which he had dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century.²⁹⁴ This

²⁹² For an overview of the extent of its transmission into the late medieval period the reader may consult Nigel Palmer’s *‘Visio Tnugdali’: The German and Dutch Translations and their Circulation in the Later Middle Ages*, *Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* 76, (Munich: Artemis, 1982).

²⁹³ Wagner, A. (ed.), *Visio Tnugdali lateinisch und altddeutsch* (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1882). He also provides an edition of two of the earliest witnesses in German. His edition superseded that of Oscar Schade [Schade, O. (ed.), *Visio Tnugdali* (Halle: Libraria Orphanotropehi, 1869)], who printed a single manuscript.

²⁹⁴ He prints the full list of manuscripts and a comparison of his chosen manuscripts on pp. x-xx.

edition was translated by Jean-Michel Picard in 1989.²⁹⁵ Since Wagner's work, many new manuscript witnesses have come to light and in her study of the relationship between VT and Albers of Windberg's German translation, Brigitte Pfeil revises the number to 172.²⁹⁶ In her edition she provides readings from a total of 15 of these, which can be dated to the twelfth century. She uses the Windberg codex, which she establishes as the codex most likely used by Alber when he compiled his poem, as her *codex optimus*. Notwithstanding the occasional regional forms or spelling variants, there is no meaningful difference, as far as I have been able to establish, between her text and that printed by Wagner. I print quotations in Latin from Pfeil.²⁹⁷

Since both Pfeil and Picard/de Pontfarcy already provide a detailed introduction to the text, there is no need to repeat their findings *in extenso* here. Briefly, the vision of Tnugdál was written at the request of abbess Gisela of St. Paul's in Regensburg.²⁹⁸ Marcus would appear to have been writing in one of the Irish Benedictine houses in Regensburg, but states that he heard the story of the vision from Tnugdál's own mouth,²⁹⁹ presumably when he was still in Ireland. Various details in the text, including mention of St. Rúadán, St. Malachy and the Irish bishops, and the three Irish kings, identified as Cormac and Donachus (Donnchad) Mac Carthaig and Conchobar Ua Briain, point to ties with Munster. These ties can be extended to the Regensburger *Schottenklöster* themselves, since St. Rúadán was venerated there and the abbot of St. James was, at the time that Marcus was in Regensburg, a kinsman of the same kings.³⁰⁰ A *Libellus de fundacione ecclesie Consecrati Petri* was written by an Irishman in the thirteenth century and provides an account of funding expeditions to Munster by this kinsman, Christianus

²⁹⁵ Picard, J.-M., (trans.) and Y. de Pontfarcy, *The Vision of Tnugdál* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1989) [hereafter *Tnugdál*].

²⁹⁶ Pfeil, B. (ed.), *Die Vision des Tnugdálus Albers von Windberg: Literatur- und Frömmigkeitgeschichte im ausgehenden 12. Jahrhundert; mit einer Edition der lateinischen "Visio Tnugdali" aus Clm 22254* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: P. Lang, 1999), pp. iv, vii. [hereafter *Pfeil*] This updates Nigel Palmer's (*op. cit.* above) count of 152 manuscripts.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* As both editors print the text in nearly identical manner the pagination is mostly identical. I have therefore considered it sufficient to print only Pfeil's. I have retained the paragraph numbers used by Picard and de Pontfarcy for ease of reference.

²⁹⁸ The abbess is referred to only as 'G.' in all manuscripts except for the Windberg manuscript edited by Pfeil, where the full name is given. See *Tnugdál*, pp. 12-3 and *Pfeil*, pp. 88-9 for a summary of the evidence.

²⁹⁹ Marcus, *sicut ab ipsius, qui uiderat et patiebatur, ore didicimus*. *Pfeil*, p. 7, *Tnugdál*, p. 110.

³⁰⁰ See *Tnugdál*, pp. 17-46 and 15-6.

Mac Carthaig to fund the build of Weih St. Peter.³⁰¹ In addition, we are fortunate in that we can date this text quite precisely to 1149 on the basis of information Marcus provides in his prologue and the vision itself, quite possibly, to November of 1148.³⁰²

2.8 *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*

Summary

The narrative opens with a dedication and a prologue in which the author compares his own work with that of Gregory and Augustine, in order to provide it with a theological framework. At the end of the prologue Patrick is introduced. The narrative is then interrupted by a tale of a bestial Irishman who does not know that homicide is a damnable sin. Returning to Patrick, we are then told that Patrick was faced with pagan Irish (whom he was attempting to convert), and who demanded to see the torments of the wicked. Jesus then appeared to him and, giving him the gospels and a staff, took him to a deserted place where he showed him a pit that will purge any truly repentant sinner who will enter it for a day and a night. Patrick built a church there and installed Augustinian canons. Following another short story regarding a single-toothed man, the author describes the ritual for admission to the Purgatory. We are then introduced to a knight named Owein, who visits the local bishop for his confession and is rebuked for his sins. Owein then insists that he will enter the Purgatory to purge his sins. Initially reluctant, the bishop finally allows this and Owein prepares himself with prayer for fifteen days. He is then given his final instructions and enters the pit. He is welcomed by fifteen men looking like monks who instruct him further, telling him not to consent to the devils, to be steadfast in his faith, and to call upon Jesus Christ in order to be delivered from torture. The devils then appear and promise him pain and affliction unless he agrees to turn back. Owein, however, scorns them by answering nothing at all. The devils then proceed to drag him through flames, but he is immediately released when he invokes the name of the Lord. They drag him away to nine further torments. First he is dragged across a wasteland with burning winds. Next there are fields on which people are pinned down and tortured by devils. The devils again threaten him with torture unless he turns back, but he refuses. In the fifth plain of torment souls are hanging from the hair or the genitals, or

³⁰¹ *Tnugdál*, pp. 15-6, 91-3. The text refers to two funding expeditions by Christianus; one to Conchobar Uí Briain, who lavishes them with treasure for the monastery; and one to a king Donatus, believed to be Donnchad, Cormac's nephew. In relation to this, however, it must be pointed out that the entire story is anachronistic: Weih St. Peter was founded in 1076, well over half a century before Christianus is believed to have visited Ireland and died there (see de Pontfarcy's comments on p. 15-6, n. 23). It is not unlikely that the writer of the *Libellus* conflated the two visits under influence of VT. If the first expedition to fund the build of Weih St. Peter was indeed in the late eleventh century, the Conchobar in question might have been the Conchobar Ó Briain who died in 1078 AD. In addition, it seems to me rather unlikely that Christianus, a Mac Carthaig and Eóganacht dynast, would have gone to ask Conchobar Ua Briain, his family's archrival at that time, for money.

³⁰² Marcus provides four reference points for the year in which he wrote down the vision. These are: 1. the second year of the expedition to Jerusalem of Conrad, King of the Romans; 2. and the fourth year of the pontificate of pope Eugene III, the year the pope travelled to Rome from Germany; 3. the year Malachy, bishop of Down and legate to the Irish, died at Clairvaux (France) on his way to Rome; 4. the year bishop Nemias of Cloyne died (Marcus, *Prologue*). There is some controversy, however, regarding the interpretation of these facts. The problem lies in the way the year is reckoned—from January to December (the modern usage), from the 1st of March (as was frequently done in the Middle Ages), or from Samhain (1 November, according to Irish tradition). Consequently, the year could be either 1148 or 1149. See the discussion by de Pontfarcy in *Tnugdál*, pp. 17-29.

are submerged in sulphur or roasted. In the sixth, the devils attempt to throw him on a wheel of fire, but he escapes again unharmed. The ninth torment is a building from which heat emanates—a bath house in which people are immersed to various degrees in bubbling liquids and metals. Next he is taken to a mountain from which they are swept away by a whirlwind which hurls them into an icy river. The devils drag him towards the south, where he sees a flame coming out of a well throwing people up like sparks—this is the entrance to hell. Owein is dragged in and suffers pain so intolerable that he nearly forgets the name of the Saviour. Invoking it, he is thrown out of the well. He is then greeted by other devils, who inform him that they will take him to the real hell. They come to a river with a slippery bridge. The devils expect him to fall off, but he does not and continues to cross the bridge, which is increasingly wider and higher. He then comes to a wall of precious metals and stones. A door opens to him and a sweet fragrance pours out that gives him strength. Inside he sees a bright land. He is welcomed by a procession as he enters and is then greeted by two archbishops. They lead him through a beautiful, bright, verdant, immense, fragrant land. He sees communities there with people of every rank, who are rejoicing and praising God. There is neither heat nor cold, but only pleasantness. The archbishops explain that he is in the earthly paradise. They explain the story of Adam and original sin, and the need to do penance after death if it is not done while alive. They also explain that people can rise to paradise after purification, and again from there to higher joy, and that—though none knows how long they must stay in a certain place—the length of time is determined by their sins and merits. Owein is then given a taste of the heavenly food, coming down to them from the sky, which is the gate of the heavenly paradise. After that he is sent back and cautioned that he should lead a holy life. The knight is sad he has to leave, but finds the devils cannot harm him on the way back. He is received once more by the fifteen men and exits the pit. Afterwards, he decides to wear the sign of the cross and go to Jerusalem. Upon his return he offers the king his services, and is appointed interpreter to Gilbert, who had just been granted land to build a monastery. Owein tells him about his experiences, and upon returning to Britain, Gilbert relates the story to others. Gilbert's final testimony concerns the story of a monk tortured by devils at night. The narrative concludes with a number of short anecdotes collected by the author himself; the testimonies of two abbots and bishop Florentianus regarding Purgatory; Florentianus' tale regarding a man who can see devils assembling at night; and his chaplain's tales about the bad hermit, the rich peasant, and the priest and the girl. The narrative ends with a brief epilogue.

The text

The earliest version of the *Tractatus the Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* (TPP) was written in England by a Cistercian monk, 'H. of Saltrey', in ca. 1180-84 AD.³⁰³ Relevant to this date are the abbacy of Hugh of Sartis, who commissioned the work,

³⁰³ Easting, R. (ed.), *St. Patrick's Purgatory: Two Versions of Owayne Miles and The Vision of William of Stranton Together with the Long Text of the Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii*, EETS 298 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) [hereafter *Easting*], p. lxxxiv and the references there. Easting prefers a date of ca. 1179-81, while Yolande De Pontfarcy argues that the text was written just before 1185 in Picard, J.-M., (trans.) and Y. de Pontfarcy, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A Twelfth Century Tale of a Journey to the Otherworld* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1985), p. 17 [hereafter *Patrick's Purgatory*].

and who held office from 1173 to 1184; and the fact that influence from *TPP* is visible in the second version of Giraldus Cambrensis' *Topographia*, which was written before July 1189, but not in the first version, written around 1186-7. Almost from the start two versions of *TPP* circulated: the one composed in 1184 and another containing interpolations, notably two homilies, composed sometime between 1186-1190, presumably by the same author.³⁰⁴ Though the manuscript tradition is extensive and the text has been printed in various forms, two branches are traditionally identified, namely α and β .³⁰⁵ Of these β is the longer text. Both de Pontfarcy and Robert Easting consider British Library, MS Royal 13.B.VIII (*Ro*, s. xii) to be one of the best copies. This manuscript, belonging to branch β , was first printed by T. Atkinson Jenkins together with a French text.³⁰⁶ Another manuscript, Utrecht, University Library, MS 178 (I.H.17) (*U*), was printed by Cornelis van der Zanden, who regarded it as being closest to the earliest form of the text.³⁰⁷ This manuscript belongs to branch α . In the absence of a full critical edition, the most recent critical edition is that by Easting. He appears to have checked 27 manuscripts of branch β , five of which are complete, four of which contain the homilies but lack other sections, and eighteen of which omit all or part of the homilies and other sections. Of the five complete manuscripts, he collates the three earliest, namely *Ro* and two other witnesses; London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 51 (*L*) and Cambridge, Sussex College, MS 50 (*Su*), all dated to s. xii^{ex} or c. 1200.³⁰⁸ I have used this edition for the present study.³⁰⁹ However, there appears to be some disagreement among scholars regarding the authority of the homilies.³¹⁰ I have

³⁰⁴ *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 16-8.

³⁰⁵ *Easting*, p. lxxxv. He counts at least 150 manuscripts (n. 1). A new critical edition of all witnesses by Picard and de Pontfarcy was announced as far back as 1987, but has not to my knowledge appeared.

³⁰⁶ Atkinson Jenkins, T. (ed.), *The Espurgatoire Seint Patriz of Marie de France with a Text of the Latin Original* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1903), pp. 78-9.

³⁰⁷ van der Zanden, C.M., *Étude sur le Purgatoire de Saint Patrice: accompagnée du texte latin d'Utrecht et du texte anglo-normand de Cambridge*, [PhD diss, University of Amsterdam] (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1927).

³⁰⁸ *Easting*, pp. lxxxvi-vii.

³⁰⁹ His edition supersedes that by Karl Warnke (Warnke, K. (ed.), *Das Buch vom Espurgatoire S. Patrice der Marie de France und seine Quelle*, Bibliotheca Normannica 9 (Halle and Saale: M. Niemeyer, 1938)). Easting points out that only one of Warke's manuscripts (*Ro*) was complete (p. lxxxvii). Since Easting's edition (unlike Picard's translation) lacks convenient paragraph numbers, I refer primarily to page and line numbers, but where paragraph numbers are mentioned these correspond to Picard's.

³¹⁰ Easting is of the opinion that β "may be a closer approximation to the original shape of [*TPP*] as [the author] either composed it or revised it" (*op. cit.*, p. lxxxvi, n. 2), while Picard and de Pontfarcy consider the homilies "interpolations which are detrimental to the balance of the text" (*op. cit.*, p. 42).

chosen to follow Picard and de Pontfarcy in omitting these, on the basis that the manuscript evidence itself also frequently shows such omission and that the homilies are not likely to contribute significantly to the present investigation.

Discussion

Though I refer the reader to de Pontfarcy's introduction for a more extended account of the text's background, I shall here provide a brief summary. The author's source for the story is Gilbert of Louth (later of Basingwerk).³¹¹ Gilbert had spent two and half years in Ireland, where he founded a monastery—likely Baltinglass—during which time Owein, who operated as his interpreter, revealed to him his experiences in the Purgatory. Having heard about the story from Gilbert, the abbot of Sartis/Wardon commissioned the monk H. of Saltrey to write it up.³¹² The narrative is therefore at least two steps removed from Owein's (presumed) oral account. The author appears sensitive to this and provides both a theological framework and corroborating evidence in his introduction and epilogue. He appears particularly concerned with providing a precedent for this sort of experience, which he finds in Gregory the Great,³¹³ and with adducing testimonies and witnesses to verify some or all of his story. In addition, the author appears to have had some reservations regarding the story himself: *non nisi iussis tamen talia presumerem*.³¹⁴ He attributes to the narrator (and his source), Gilbert, the background story regarding the origin of Patrick's Purgatory, as well as additional testimonies, such as those regarding the Irishman who knew not that homicide was a damnable sin³¹⁵ and regarding a supernatural experience that took place in Gilbert's own monastery.³¹⁶ Some of the other supporting anecdotes appear to be the result of his own inquiry, such as the testimonies of the two Irish abbots, Bishop Florentianus and the Bishop's chaplain at the end. Some of these seem reliable, but some have the air of local folklore and pious fables; according to de Pontfarcy at least one of them, the story of the Irishman who did not know homicide was a capital sin (attributed to Gilbert), appears to be an

³¹¹ §22. *me quoque audiente*. Easting, p. 150, l. 1098.

³¹² See §§21-2. Easting, p. 149-50; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 72-3. The text is provided with a dedication mentioning both H. of Sartris and 'brother H.' of Saltrey. See further *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 14-5 and Easting, pp. xvii-xx.

³¹³ The author compares his own account with that of Gregory.

³¹⁴ Easting, p. 121, ll. 10-1. *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 43.

³¹⁵ §1, Easting, pp. 123-4. *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 46-7.

³¹⁶ §22-3 in *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 73-4; Easting, pp. 150-1.

invention smacking of English colonialism.³¹⁷ It has previously been recognised that the narrative betrays a Cistercian bias.

The place referred to as the Purgatory in the narrative is located on Station Island in Lough Derg.³¹⁸ A monastic settlement is believed to have been founded on Station Island as early as the seventh century, but subsequently destroyed. In 850 a certain Patrick was abbot of the nearby Saint's Island on which Station Island was dependent.³¹⁹ Around 1140, Saint's Island became a priory dependent on the Augustinian canons of SS Peter and Paul in Armagh and it is not until this period, the middle of the twelfth century, that the Purgatory is alluded to in secondary sources.³²⁰ The Purgatory continued as place of pilgrimage well into the late Middle Ages and various accounts of visitors of the Purgatory have been preserved from later times.³²¹ In 1497, however, the 'Cave of the Purgatory' was closed by order of the Pope, it being understood, according to the *AU* that, contrary to popular belief, this was not the Purgatory Patrick was given by Christ.³²²

³¹⁷ *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 47.

³¹⁸ But, see Jocelin of Furness (1185-86), *Vita Sancti Patricii*, for the contemporaneous view that it was based in Croagh Patrick. Discussed in the Introduction in *Patrick's Purgatory*.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 22.

³²¹ For the later tradition see e.g. Seymour, S.J.D., *St. Patrick's Purgatory: A Mediaeval Pilgrimage in Ireland* (Dundalk: W. Tempest, 1918) and Leslie, S., *Saint Patrick's Purgatory: A Record from History and Literature* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932) and more recently Haren, M. and Y. de Pontfarcy (eds.), *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg and the European Tradition* (Eniskillen: Clogher Historical Society, 1988).

³²² *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 11.

3. Form and Rhetoric

In the previous chapters I have provided, alongside an introduction to the key texts, an overview of the elementary framework of vision literature in the medieval period as understood in modern scholarship as well as a methodological basis for a generic analysis. I now turn to the texts themselves. The purpose of the following analysis is to interrogate the characteristics of the genre as expressed by our key texts in terms of the paradigm put forward at the end of chapter one. In this chapter I shall focus on the form and rhetoric of a *uisio*, before continuing with the more thematic aspects of time and space in chapter four.

3.1 Manner of Revelation

We have already established that a vision text describes a revelatory experience that involves both a visual aspect and a form of displacement, so that it is often referred to as a journey to the afterworld or *Jenseitsreise*. This section investigates how the manner of revelation is portrayed in the text. For this purpose, I examine the titles or rubrics provided in the manuscript, which are important (and our only) taxonomic indicators, as well as internal references to the manner of revelation, such as references to the experience of seeing and travelling. In addition, this section contains a discussion of discourse structures in the text. As I have hinted above, the connection between the visionary and his guide, and the latter's role as informant or mediator, are considered to be significant aspects of the visionary experience. As we shall see, an examination of the discourse structures in the text provides insight into the nature of this relationship and reveals the integral function of discourse in the visionary experience and in the structure of the text as a whole.

3.1.1 Titles

In considering the evidence provided by rubrication, I have—unless there is evidence to the contrary—taken the manuscript titles to be contemporary. Not all of the key texts are titled as *uisio* or *fís* in the manuscript. Two of the texts, the visions of Fursa and of Lóchán, are incorporated in a larger narrative structure and thus do not have a separate title. That said, it is worthwhile to briefly look at *VF* in this context. Though the majority of manuscript witnesses refer to this text as a *Vita*, the oldest extant manuscript (*H*) of *VF* gives as title *Transitus beati Fursei* and one other, in the list

provided by Krusch, gives *Vita uel uisio sancti Fursei*. Though these are the exceptions to the rule, both titles bear testimony to the prominence of the visions in the Life.³²³ In addition, at least two of the early manuscripts indicate the start or the end (or both) of one or more of Fursa's visions within the text itself.³²⁴ Turning then to those texts with Latin rubrics first, *Red. VI* is only identified as a vision by its title in one of the three manuscripts: it is headed by *Incipit castigatio sanctae paulae de hominis peccatoris* in *StG*¹, by *In christo nomene incipit uita sancti pauli* in *V*² and by *Visio sancti pauli apo[...]* in *Le*.³²⁵ Of these, it must be noted that the last is also the youngest manuscript, dated to the ninth or early tenth century. *Red. XI* is headed *sancti apostoli*,³²⁶ which looks like a fragment and not a full title. A quick glance, for comparison, at the rubrics listed for the known manuscripts containing a copy of one of the redactions reveals that the title *uisio* is used for approximately half of them, supplemented regularly by a reference to the *pena inferni*; where the word *uisio* is lacking, the latter often forms the main element of the title.³²⁷ The *VT* is normally titled as a *uisio*: in the manuscript edited by Pfeil the prologue is titled *Incipit prefatio in uisionem cuiusdam militis Tnugdali nomine Hyberniensis (...)* and the beginning of the text following that with *Incipit uisio cuiusdam militis Hiberniensis (...)*. Both the prologue and the beginning of *TPP* are provided with a rubric reading *Incipit (prefatio) de purgatorio sancti patricij* in *Ro*³²⁸ and with *Incipit tractatus de purgatorio sancti Patricii ex historia Hibernie* in *U*.³²⁹ The copy of *SVA* in *B* is given, lined in red, the rubric *Visio quam uidit Adamnanus vir Spiritu sancto plenus*.³³⁰ This is copied in *T*, but no title is given in *F*, which instead simply begins the text with *[IS]*³³¹ *ē nī ata ann so*, with the first four words in red. We may

³²³ In those sections of the chapter where phraseology or semantics are of concern, I have, for the sake of convenient comparison, grouped the texts by language rather than date. Krusch, 'Vita virtutesque', p. 434.

³²⁴ E.g. *finit uisio* at §17 in *H*, followed by *uisio tertia* at §19; and *finit prima uisio* at §5 in *C* and *finit secunda uisio. Incipit uita illius annualis* at § 17.

³²⁵ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 921. Cf. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 215.

³²⁶ The rubric is unevenly spaced, as if something is missing. The manuscript may be consulted at <http://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/bav/bav_pal_lat_220/0117>. Cf. O'Sullivan, 'Redaction XI'; Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 918.

³²⁷ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 610, 543-7 and 653-4.

³²⁸ Atkinson Jenkins, *The Espurgatoire*, pp. 78-9.

³²⁹ van der Zanden, *Étude*, p. 4.

³³⁰ See my edition in Appendix A below.

³³¹ The initials were meant to be decorated but are missing. The scribe, however, supplied the word to be decorated in the top left corner.

conclude that the use of *uisio* as a title for these texts is thus relatively well-established.

A few observations ought to be made here, however. First, neither *Red. XI* nor *TPP* are referred to as a *uisio* in the title. In the case of *Red. XI*, the title is likely a fragment, so that we cannot draw any conclusions from it. In the case of *TPP*, the title clearly pitches the text as a tract on purgatory. In fact, the text never claims to be a *uisio* despite the fact that the author deliberately contextualises his text with reference to visionary accounts. Second, two of the texts discussed here are only referred to as *uisio* secondarily. The most commonly used title for the text containing Fursa's visions remains *Vita S. Fursei*. It is noteworthy, however, that the oldest now extant manuscript instead refers to it as a *transitus* 'passage'.³³² We have seen that *Red. VI* is established in one manuscript as a text on the punishment of sinners, in the second as a *uita*,³³³ and only in the third as a *uisio*. It must be observed, however, that the copy in *StG*¹ is the only complete version, so that the fragmentary state of the text in the other manuscript may be a factor in explaining their titles. That the manuscript which read *uisio* (*Le*) is also the youngest copy means that its title may have been influenced by the increasing number of visions appearing in the eighth and ninth century.³³⁴ Lastly, the *Second Vision of Adomnán*, even though it carries the title *uisio*, is a homily which has taken for its topic a prophecy of an approaching calamity. As we shall see, it is rather the perceived context that a *uisio* implies that the author is drawing on. He, in effect, presents the contents of his entire text as the contents of a revelation, in order to add authority to his text.³³⁵

VL lacks a title in the manuscript, but the title *fís* for this type of text is confirmed by *FA*, which carries the rubric, lined in red, *Incipit Fís Adomnáin inso sis* in *B*. Windisch prints the title *Fís Adamnan inso sis* for *LU*.³³⁶ The writing is just visible under a dark smudge on the page above the text. There is no title present in *F*,

³³² This title is normally associated with another Latin visionary text, the *Transitus Mariae*, which is an apocalyptic text derived from *VSP* (see below, n. 378). I have not come across any other examples of this title.

³³³ Carozzi (*Le voyage*, p. 269) thinks the title *uita* must be an aberration and suggests it should without a doubt be corrected to *uia* (n. 548). Carozzi, however, was not yet aware of the existence of *Le*. I see no reason to emend.

³³⁴ For a quick chronological overview of visions produced in the Middle Ages see e.g. the appendix in Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, pp. 206-9 or the tables in Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur*, pp. 13-28.

³³⁵ See below, 3.3.2, pp. 187ff.

³³⁶ Windisch, 'Die Vision', p. 169.

where the first line of the text has been capitalised instead.³³⁷ However, in *Q* (early 16th century) the title is given as *aislingthi adhamnáin*.³³⁸

The word *fís* itself is derived from Latin *uisio* and commonly translated as ‘vision’, to which the *DIL* adds that it refers particularly to a vision ‘of symbolic or prophetic import’,³³⁹ but the evidence from the visions is scanty since most of them are in Latin. There is, however, some corroborating evidence from within the narrative by means of self-referentiality. The vision of Lóchán, though it does not carry a title, is indicated by both the word *fís* and the word *aislinge* in the narrative:

gu tarfas fís dho ‘a vision was shewn to him’
atconnarcsa aislingi ‘and I beheld a vision’³⁴⁰

Note that the translator here chose to translate both with ‘vision’. Yet he may not have been far removed in this interpretation from the original author: in the text both these lines are glossed with the same phrase—once in the 1st person sg. and once in the 3rd sg.—*a/mu breith d'fegadh nimhe 7 ithfírn*. In addition, the author of *FA* writes:

(§39) Óro foillsig trá aingel in coímthechta do anmain Adomnáin na
físi-sea flatha nime³⁴¹

Both the title and the internal evidence from these texts confirm the usage of *fís* as a term of reference for visions of the afterlife. However, one cannot make an argument out of evidence from merely two examples. I must therefore attempt to find further evidence elsewhere.

A first step might be to turn to the tale lists, discussed in Appendix C below. The inclusion of a category *físi* in the tale lists would, taken at face value, appear to confirm the usage of the title *fís*. But the uncertainty of the date at which they might have been included, i.e. as part of the original list, or as an addendum at any time prior to the composition of *X*, means that they indicate no more than that *fís* was sufficiently familiar as a ‘tale-topic’ by the tenth century at the earliest—if we are to

³³⁷ That is: [M]AGHNUS DOMINUS NOSTER 7 MAGHNA VIRTUS. The first capital is missing. It was likely left out for decoration at a later stage.

³³⁸ Vendryes, ‘*Aislingthi Adhamnáin*’, p. 23.

³³⁹ *DIL* s.v. *fís*. It is glossed *.i. a uisione*, Corm. Y 595, O’Mulc. 545.

³⁴⁰ Stokes, W, ‘The Voyage’, p. 30-3.

³⁴¹ ‘The guardian angel had revealed to the soul of Adomnán these visions of the kingdom of heaven.’

take the earliest dating for *Airec Menman*—and by the twelfth century at the latest.³⁴² The substitution of *fís* for texts otherwise known as *baili*, moreover, casts doubt on the reliability of the list for the usage of the title *fís*, especially in the light of absence of evidence from the visions that point to an affiliation with the genre *baile*. The only potentially reliable entry in the tale lists is the title *Fís Fursa*, as we know that a version of Fursa's visions must have been available in Ireland by the early ninth century at the latest.

On the other hand, we do have the word *aislinge* to consider, which is normally translated as 'vision or dream'. Though there is no doubt concerning the meaning 'dream', the precise nuance between the meanings 'dream' and 'vision', or the significance of this distinction, seems unclear. The appropriate translation is normally decided upon with reference to the context, but, notwithstanding its inherent association with sleep, it does not seem at all certain to me that the term *aislinge* necessarily implies sleeping. For instance, Mac Con Glinne's vision is referred to as an *aislinge* when he is visited by an angel, but the text does not specify whether he is actually awake during the night or not—in my opinion, though, this is what the text implies.³⁴³ On the other hand, the *aislingi coildnidi* received by an anchorite in the *MonTall* clearly describes a dream received while asleep.³⁴⁴

Perhaps *Cáin Domnaig* offers some suggestive examples: it refers to the vision during which the Sunday Letter was revealed as follows: *danarfaid in nóeb i n-aslingiu don't saccart nobíd frisin altóir*.³⁴⁵ In this case the priest is described as asleep (*con-tuil in clérech*). A few lines earlier the text refers to the Apocalypse of John as follows:

i n-domnach atcess d'Eoin .i. mac Stepedii in aslingthi n-adamrai 7 in
fís nóemda .i. apocolipsis na rún.³⁴⁶

³⁴² The oldest manuscript of list A, the *Book of Leinster*, dates to the twelfth century. See Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, p. 33 and Toner, 'Reconstructing', pp. 97, 113.

³⁴³ Jackson, K.H. (ed.), *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* (Dublin: DIAS, 1990), pp. 11-12, (§29); Meyer, K., et al., *The Vision of MacConglinne: A Middle-Irish Wonder Tale* (London: D. Nutt, 1892).

³⁴⁴ Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery', p. 155. Cf. a similar example in the *Old Irish Penitential* II.17 (Bieler, L. (ed. and trans.), *The Irish Penitentials*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 5 (Dublin: DIAS, 1963).

³⁴⁵ 'the saint revealed it in a vision to the priest who was at the altar'. O'Keeffe, J.G., (ed and trans.), 'Cáin Domnaig', *Ériu* 2 (1905) 189-214, pp. 204-5.

³⁴⁶ 'On Sunday there was seen by John, son of Zebedee, the wonderful vision and the heavenly revelation, viz: the Apocalypse of the Mysteries.' *Ibid.*, pp. 200-1.

The editor's translation is suggestive, of course: he could have translated 'the wonderful dream and the heavenly vision'. Either way, it seems that here the Book of Revelation may be both an *aislinge* and a *fís*—even though it seems unlikely it was understood as a dream. In two other manuscript copies, however, this line reads *Adconn̄c Joh̄ mac Stepedie an fís apocolipsis na run* (the editor's *HY*).²⁷ Here perhaps we may read something along the lines of 'vision of the Apocalypse', given the common understanding of *apocalypsis* as 'revelation',³⁴⁷ and in this case only the word *fís* is used. Of course, there is no indication that John was asleep in Rev. 1:10, so that the term *aslingthi* can only have been intended as a (near-)equivalent to *fís*.

There are further examples of the terms used in conjunction. In the Passion of Silvester in *B*, there are two examples of the two terms combined, once as an genitival construction and once as a pair:

in adaig-sin din ro-saerait na maccu endga o bas, atchonnairc in rí
aislinge ⁊ fís in oidche-sin (l. 413)³⁴⁸

tadbais Petar apstal do Siluestar hi fhís aislinge (l.348)³⁴⁹

Even though the two constructions are different, the editor translates them in such a way as to mean the same thing. In the first example, however, the text literally reads 'the king saw a dream and a vision that night'. In the second example, 'by dream' would seem to cover the Irish, though perhaps we might even read 'dream-vision'.

From these samples regarding the description of visionary experiences, it seems to me that, while there certainly was a significant overlap between the terms *fís* and *aislinge*, what remains open is whether the usage of the terms side by side implies a semantic extension of the incident described—intended as an explanation perhaps of the type or setting of the vision—or whether we are dealing with synonyms juxtaposed for emphasis. Part of the answer may be found by examining individual examples to determine the context. For instance, a revelation might appear in a dream and thus be both an *aislinge* and a *fís*, as in the Passion of Silvester. But, as we have seen, the context does not always provide a satisfactory answer. In

³⁴⁷ The word does not appear to be commonly used outside the context of the Apocalypse, from which the Irish form derives. *DIL* s.v. *abcoilips*. It is also associated with *rún* 'secret', in the sense of revealing secrets. See *DIL* s.v. *rún*.

³⁴⁸ Atkinson, R. (ed. and trans.), *The Passions and the Homilies from Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation and Glossary*, TLS 2 (Dublin: The Academy, 1887), pp. 52, 290. 'On the very night these innocent children were saved from death, the king beheld a vision in a dream'.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 288. 'the apostle Peter appeared to Sylvester in a vision by dream',

addition, in the case of translations of Biblical material, one needs to take into account that the words *uisio* and *somnium* are repeatedly juxtaposed in the Bible, and appear to have been regarded as synonyms.³⁵⁰ Irish writers would inevitably have been influenced by this.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the samples above, it seems to me that *aislinge* may have been used for a wider variety of visionary, and especially dream-like, experiences, while the meaning of *fís* may have been closer to that of Latin *uisio*—from which the noun is, after all, derived—particularly regarding its connotations with (Biblical) supernatural experiences. Hence follows naturally the connection between *fís* and *abcoilips*. I am not aware of any case in which the word *fís* is used for a non-revelatory dream, which category can therefore tentatively be excluded from the semantic range of *fís*.³⁵¹ Thus where the terms appear to be used side by side for a single event, we cannot automatically exclude the possibility that the word *fís* was used to add an extra dimension, that of revelation or prophecy, to the occurrence, rather than merely representing a synonym. On the other hand, the words *fís* and *aislinge* are both commonly used with *ad-cí* and *do-adbat* and occasionally with *foillsigidir*, so that the notion of a revelatory dream is not exclusive to the usage of *fís*.³⁵² In *VL*, quoted above, the differentiation of verbs used in conjunction with *fís* and *aislinge* is remarkable, but based on this single contrasting example no further conclusions may be drawn. It is notable, however, that the title ‘*aislinge*’ does not appear to be used for eschatological visions—to my knowledge—until the Early Modern period. Both the Paris manuscript (*Q*), containing the title *Aislingthe Adhamnáin*, and the Early Modern Irish translation of *VT* in TCD MS 1337 [H.3.18]

³⁵⁰ See Num. 12:6; Job 7:14, 20:8, 33:15; Isa. 29:7; Dan. 2:28, 4:2, 4:6, 7:1; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17. I wish to thank John Carey for pointing this out to me.

³⁵¹ There are doubtful cases, however. For instance, the precise circumstances of the following line from the *Book of Leinster* (*LL*) are not unambiguous: *adbul físi armothá \.i. mor int aslingi atchondarc/* ‘wondrous visions after that (that is, great is the dream I saw)’ *LL* 208a 1.10. (Cf. Windisch, E. and W. Stokes (eds.), *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1880), p. i.162.5, where the gloss is omitted). The previous stanza would seem to indicate the speaker went to sleep (*Tuilsitir mo derca suain*, trans. Skene in *Irish Texts*, p. 164, ‘my eyes slumbered in sleep’), which is possibly why *fís* is subsequently glossed as *aislinge*. If I understand the poem correctly, the descriptions of strange things following would seem to appear in this dream.

³⁵² Based on examples from the *DIL*, however, it would seem that the occurrence of *fís* with *ad-bat* is slightly higher. Unfortunately, a larger corpus of reference material would be needed to reach any definite conclusions regarding such bias and what significance, if any, it may have.

date to the 16th century—the actual manuscript of the latter being a copy of the 17th century.³⁵³ The editor, Kuno Meyer, writes that

It is noteworthy that our translator does not employ the word *fīs* for “vision”. Apparently *fīs* had early become obsolete. In O’Clery’s Glossary it is explained by *taidhbsi*.³⁵⁴

If this was indeed the case, it may perhaps be partially explained by the degree of overlap between *fīs* and *aislinge* as descriptive terms. The absence of *aislinge* in favour of *fīs* in the titles of eschatological visions during the medieval period confirms the primary association of *fīs* with *uisio* in semantic and taxonomic as well as etymological terms. If this is accepted, as I think it has been implicitly in scholarship to date, it would in turn provide further proof that we are indeed dealing with a contemporary generic affiliation with the *uisio* (on taxonomic as well as typological levels).

3.1.2 Manner of Revelation: Vision and Journey

Where manuscript rubrics can provide us with an indication of the provenance of the title *uisio* or *fīs*, the description of the visionary event and references to the visionary’s journey in the actual text can provide us with further evidence of the type of revelation envisaged by the author and clarify any distinctions that may have been made. As we will see, emphasis on the visual elements or the journey aspect varies within each text.

VF

Of his four visions, Fursa’s first visionary experience is the only one in which we are given a detailed description of his visual impressions.

(§2) Et cum se tenebrarum caligine circumdare uidisset, quattuor manus desuper ad se extensas conspexit, tenentesque illum per brachia, niueis subuolabant pennis. Manus quippe sub pennis erant, quae illum ex utraque parte sustinebant, et quasi per caliginem angelica cernebat corpora. Altius uero perueniens, mirifico splendentes fulgore facies sanctorum cernebat angelorum uel, ut

³⁵³ Friedel, V.H. and K. Meyer (eds.), *La vision de Tondale (Tnudgal): Textes français, anglo-normand et irlandais* (Paris: H. Champion, 1907), p. 89.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92, n. 1.

certius dicam, claritatem eximiae lucis ex ipsis angelicis intuebatur
conspectibus³⁵⁵

The vocabulary includes standard verbs of seeing, such as *uidere*, *conspicere*, *cernere* and *intui*, but it is clear from the phrase *altius uero perueniens* that he sees himself being transported to some higher place. The fact that Fursa, at this point in the vision, is not aware of this yet³⁵⁶ may explain the reticence here concerning his displacement. In the second vision (the main vision) the description of the experience is somewhat condensed, but there it states explicitly that he is being transported (*leuantibus*, *transiens*).

(§6) *Leuantibusque eum angelis, nihil tecti aut domus aspiciens,
ululatus et clamores daemoniorum per medium eorum transiens
audiuit*³⁵⁷

For the third and fourth vision extended descriptions are not repeated. When describing the third vision, which happens exactly a year after the second, the author refers back to his experience by stating only that ‘he saw himself in a vision taken out of the body’ (§19),³⁵⁸ and continues to relate the message announced by the angel. For the fourth, we are simply given the message conveyed (§21). In short, the emphasis on his visual impressions at the start of the text serves merely to relate to the audience what kind of experience of he had. For the remainder of the account, the emphasis lies primarily on the message the visions convey.

Though Fursa is certainly displaced and transported elsewhere, we are, throughout the text, told very little about his movements. At no point is the location to which Fursa is taken identified; instead we must infer that he is in ‘the air’ somewhere from the description of the four fires, which he apparently sees in the air below him (§8).³⁵⁹ Second, we are told that his location is protected or shielded off

³⁵⁵ ‘And when he beheld about him shades of darkness, he perceived four hands extended to him from above, which held him by the arms, flying upon snowy wings. For their hands were beneath their wings, and held him up on either side and he discerned the angels’ bodies as it were through darkness. But coming higher he discerned the faces of the holy angels, shining as the marvellous lightning, or (I say more exactly) he looked upon the brightness of exalted light from the very countenance of the angels.’

³⁵⁶ See 3.2.2 and 3.2.4 below, pp. 148, 163.

³⁵⁷ ‘And the angels lifting him, perceiving no manner of roof or house, he heard the shouts and clamours of demons; going through the midst of them.’

³⁵⁸ *quo uisione corporis sublatus uidibat*. Rackham, *Transitus*, pp. 46-9.

³⁵⁹ *uidit uallem tenebrosam sub se in imo positam et uidit quattuor ignes ibidem in aëre aliquibus spatiis a se distantes*. ‘[he] beheld a valley of darkness set in the depth beneath him; and beheld four fires in the air, distant from each other by certain spaces.’

in some way by fire, as he has to travel through it when he arrives and again when he leaves, with the one angel dividing the flames and the two others shielding him:

(§8) Tunc uidit sanctum angelum praecedentem ignem flammam diuidere in duos muros utroque latere; et duo sancti angeli utroque latere ab igne defendebant eum.³⁶⁰

Once within this barrier, however, Fursa apparently stays in the same place throughout his visit. The angels are said to move about and back and forth (§11) and Fursa can see a door through which they go to the ‘heavenly assembly’ (*supernus conuentus*) and through which he hears multitudes of angels singing ‘Holy Holy Holy Lord God of Sabaoth’ (§11). We have no way of knowing whether this lack of specificity regarding Fursa’s location has its basis in Fursa’s own experience or whether it perhaps reflects the author’s uneasiness, but the image of Fursa’s ascent thus portrayed is wholly in line with contemporary beliefs regarding the cosmos and the locations of heaven and of the Devil.³⁶¹ Whilst Fursa is certainly removed from his body to another location, there is otherwise little emphasis on the geography of the afterlife in this text.

VL

In *VL* the experience of seeing or witnessing is repeatedly described with *co n-acai* ‘he saw’ or other forms of the same verb as dictated by context. In §2 the opening of the vision is described as follows:

*Ocus co n-aca in deilb n-etroucht eter an cro caingel 7 an altoir. . Asbert an delb fris, ‘Tair am dochum!’ ... Co n-acai a anmain opunn, co mbui fora mullach 7 ni fitir cia conair do-choid asin churp. Co n-acai ba obeola ind eclais suas dochum nime. Co n-acai na ngabsat da aingel eturru 7 con-uacabsat isin aér.*³⁶²

³⁶⁰ ‘Then he saw the holy angel that went before divide the flame of fire into two walls on either hand; and two holy angels on either side defend him from the fire.’ Cf. §16 *Sed angelus domini, sicut aute* [ante], *medium diuidens findebat ignem* ‘But the angel of the Lord, as before, clave the fire, dividing it in the midst’.

³⁶¹ See below, chapter 4.

³⁶² ‘And he saw a radiant shape between the chancel rail and the altar. ... He suddenly saw that his soul was above the crown of his head, and he did not know by what way it had gone out of the body. He saw that the church was open, up to heaven. He saw that two angels took him between them, and raised him into the air.’ Carey, ‘The Vision of Laisrén’.

The repetition of the phrase *co n-accae* progresses the storyline here: the audience is led through a string of impressions.³⁶³ The style emphasizes the act of seeing and is not altogether different from that of everyday speech: it gives the reader the impression of listening to a retelling. The text continues in the same vein, switching, however to the plural for most of the rest of the text, starting §3. This switch emphasizes the implicit bond of guardian and charge between the angel and Laisrén in this experience. Whereas §2 describes Laisrén's 'witnessing' of his departure, in §3, which begins with *co n-accatar*, and in the remainder of the text, the tone is decidedly more collective, and emphasizes the opposition between Laisrén and the angel on the one hand and the devils on the other.

Like Fursa, Laisrén is said to be raised into the air (§2 *isin aéir*), but the text does not specify the location further. It is not until after the angels have managed to shake off the devils that the journey can begin. We are told Laisrén traverses a great valley towards a 'great pit like the mouth of a cave' (§8 *fochluí mar amal bíd beolu uama*) and enters it to proceed towards the mouth of hell, of which he also gets a glimpse. The angels are carrying him with them during this visit.³⁶⁴ We are told that they are moving northward (*fothuaithe* §8), but not whether the journey—once in 'the air'—proceeds vertically or horizontally. We are led to infer such information from environmental descriptions: we might infer, perhaps, that by passing through a valley, Laisrén is travelling in a more or less horizontal and linear fashion, whilst he might be descending when he goes into the cave. This leaves the impression that the 'great valley on top of the mountain' (*gleann mar i n-ochtúr an tsleibí*) and the *erportach* of hell are located underground, in what one might term a 'netherworld', though we cannot be certain, and the text breaks off just at the start of the description of hell. However, the author has provided us with names, or definitions, as well as descriptions of the different locations Laisrén passes through, which form both the backdrop, as we shall see, and the way points for the central scenes.

³⁶³ In the last (now extant) paragraph of the text, the perfect *at-connaire* is used instead.

³⁶⁴ *Beirid tra an fer-sa co n-aicedar ifern* (§7).

Red. VI

Red. VI identifies itself as a text concerning Paul's message for sinners (*Incipit castigatio ... de hominis peccatoris*) and opens with the statement that *Sanctus Paulus ductus est in regnum Dei, ut uideret opera iustorum et poenas peccatorum*.³⁶⁵

On the basis of Paul's famous statement in 2 Cor 12, we might expect to read here that he was taken to the third heaven, but we learn instead that he has been taken to the first (*primo caelo*, §2).³⁶⁶ The body of the text is made up of a series of descriptions of punishments without any further reference to the precise location where they take place.³⁶⁷ The text would seem to imply, however, that Paul is continuously moving about: each paragraph begins with the phrase *uenit in alio loco, uidit* 'he came to another place; he saw' (...). These paragraphs normally consist of the following threefold structure: i. a description of sinners being punished; ii. a question from Paul as to what their sin was; iii. the angel's explanation.³⁶⁸ In the last two paragraphs we find two more references to locations, the first one of which is ostensibly the last place visited by him in the text: *pleno caelo de pecunia multa* 'a heaven full of wealth(?)' (§11). The last describes where Paul's family resides; *in infernum usurantur*³⁶⁹ 'they are being burned in hell' (§12). The narrative structure highlights that the emphasis lies on the journey aspect of the text, though here too geographical details are largely omitted. Also lacking is any description of Paul's journey up to heaven—such as we have seen in *VF* and *VL*—or, for that matter, his method of travelling while in heaven.

Red. XI

This redaction, related in the first person, starts off with the famous quote from 2 Cor 12:2,³⁷⁰ to which it adds, in an interesting variation on *VSP*, the information that Paul

³⁶⁵ 'Holy Paul is led into the kingdom of God to see the works of the just and the punishments of the sinners'.

³⁶⁶ Perhaps because of Paul's own admission that he was not allowed to speak of what he saw in the third heaven (2 Cor 12:4). This aspect of the text is evidently modelled on *VSP* §21, in which the angel first shows Paul things he cannot speak of (and which are not described in the text), before continuing to show him things he *should* speak of (which thus form the rest of the text), starting at the foundations of the gates of heaven.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 269.

³⁶⁸ Only two paragraphs deviate from this pattern. See 3.1.3 below, pp. 111-14.

³⁶⁹ Read *urantur*.

³⁷⁰ (§1) *Scio hominem raptum usque ad tertium celum*.

was taken up *in naui aurea* ‘in a golden boat’³⁷¹ and that there were *quasi tres angeli hymnum dicentes* ‘something like three angels singing a hymn’ before him. Paul then sees heaven opened,³⁷² and describes, in a string of Biblical quotations, how he saw the Son of God in a great city in heaven with twelve walls around it and twelve towers and an altar in its middle (§2).³⁷³ Having thus been transported straight to the heavenly court, he then proceeds to describe a series of seven further places, harbouring both the just and the wicked. From this point onwards reference is made to journeying three times, when the angel guide invites Paul: *ueni, sequere me et ostendam tibi* ‘come, follow me and I will show you’.³⁷⁴ However, the phrase *Sta hic modo* ‘Stand here now’ (§7) might suggest that, at least for the following two paragraphs, which each begin with *et respexi* ‘and I looked again’, Paul is standing still. The emphasis of the text is certainly on the visual, and centres wholly around the various scenes of reward and punishment shown to Paul. As in *Red. VI*, each paragraph introduces a new scene, which the angel then explains. The narrative structure predominantly progresses with repeated statements of seeing: *(et) uidi*³⁷⁵ or *et respexi iterum*.³⁷⁶ This type of phrasing is, in fact, very similar to the repeated *con-accae* of *VL*.

FA

In the prologue to *FA* the author places his text in the context of apostolic visionary traditions:

(§9) Sochaide trá do noemaib ⁊ d'fíreanaib ⁊ do deisciplaib in Choimded Ísu Críst diaro foillsigthea rúna ⁊ deirritiusa muintire nime fón cumma-sin ⁊ fochraice forórda na fíren ⁊ didiu diaro foillsigthea piana écsamla ifirn cosna fíb filet intib.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ Cf. *VSP* §23, where Paul crosses the Acherusian lake to the City of Christ in a golden boat. Besides that text, the only other text I know of that describes a golden boat as a method of transportation to heaven is the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, which is related to *VSP* (Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p. 150). In both texts the boat journey is equally affiliated with singing. However, the boat as a vehicle for journeying up to heaven is unique to *Red. XI*. This redaction has a second strong link with *VSP*, in particular *L¹* and *L³*, because it retains the first person narrative perspective.

³⁷² (§2) *Et uidi celum apertum* (Rev. 19:11).

³⁷³ On this scene, see chapter 4.2.2, p. 216.

³⁷⁴ §§ 4, 10, 11. A quote from Rev. 17:1 / Matt. 19:21.

³⁷⁵ §§ 2-4, 7-11 ‘and I saw’; it is used no less than 31 times in these paragraphs.

³⁷⁶ §§ 8-11 ‘and I looked again’ (used eight times).

³⁷⁷ ‘Indeed, there is a multitude of the saints and the righteous and the apostles and the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to whom the secrets and mysteries of the household of heaven, and the golden

For this description the author uses the verb *ro foillsigthea*, perf. pass. 3pl of *foillsigidir* ‘reveals’. He proceeds, then, with a description of three different revelations: the revelation to the apostle Peter in Acts 10:10-23, where a four-cornered vessel carrying animals is lowered down to him from the sky; that in which Paul is taken up to the third heaven according to his own statement in 2 Cor 12:2-3; and the revelation described in the apocryphal text *Transitus Mariae*,³⁷⁸ in which all the apostles are taken to see the punishments of hell on the day of Mary’s death. The inclusion of the revelation to the apostle Peter here is remarkable as it is not actually an eschatological vision of the afterlife, but a revelation regarding food prescriptions. Its description is similarly phrased to the opening above, using *ro foillsiged* (3sg):

(§9) Ro foillsiged ém do Phetar apstal ind long cethairdide do-reilced do nim³⁷⁹

The verb here loosely describes the apparition in the Biblical text.³⁸⁰ Needless to say, Peter does not journey anywhere, nor does he seem, in the original source, to see this

rewards of the righteous have been revealed in that way, and to whom the various punishments of hell have been revealed as well, with the things which are in them.’ Carey, *Fís Adomnáin*.

³⁷⁸ For an introduction to this text see Elliott, J. K. (trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in English Translation Based on M R James* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993; repr. 2009), pp. 691-723 (hereafter *ANT*). We do not know in what form exactly the information in this text came to Ireland, as the closest parallel to the paragraph here is not the most common Latin version (*Transitus Mariae* B), but the Syriac *Obsequies of the Holy Virgin*. There is, besides, another Irish homily which contains this information, as well as a version of the plea “Michael, chief of the angels, Michael our strength, Michael our general” in the *Obsequies*. (Breatnach, C. (ed. and trans.) ‘An Irish Homily on the Life of the Virgin Mary’, *Ériu* 51 (2000) 23-58; for the *Obsequies*: Wright, W., *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament, Collected and Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), pp. 42-51, qtd at p. 47.) John Carey discusses the relationship of the entry in *FA* with the other Irish versions of the *Transitus Mariae* as well as with the Syriac *Obsequies*, in the notes to his forthcoming edition of *FA*. For a summary of the various translations of the text see *ANT*; and for the Irish texts see Donahue, C., *The Testament of Mary: The Gaelic Version of the Dormitio Mariae Together with an Irish Latin Version* (Fordham: Fordham UP, 1942) and McNamara, *The Apocrypha*, no. 97 and the works there cited. Translations may be consulted in Seymour, S.J.D., ‘Irish Versions of the *Transitus Mariae*’, *JTS* o.s. 23 (89) (1921) 36-43 and Herbert, M. and M. McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha: Selected Texts in Translation* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989), pp. 119-31. A new edition of the Irish material is forthcoming in the next volume of *Apocrypha Hiberniae*, published as part of the *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum*.

³⁷⁹ ‘For there was revealed to the apostle Peter the four-cornered vessel which was let down from heaven.’

³⁸⁰ Before Peter’s vision, the text relates how God sends another vision to a man called Cornelius, who is to seek out Peter and ask his advice. Here the vision is described as *uidit in uisu manifeste quasi hora nona diei angelum Dei introeuntem ad se* ‘This man saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him’ (10:3).

apparition with his bodily eyes: Acts 10:10 reads that Peter was struck by a *mentis excessus* ‘an ecstasy of mind’.³⁸¹

The second example concerns the confession of Paul in 2 Cor 12, in which he states that ‘a man’ (taken to be Paul himself) was taken up to the third heaven. Paul’s journey is here described as

(§9) Con-uargabad dano Pól apstal cosin tres nem co cuala briathra diaisnéite na n-aingel ⁊ immacallaim n-adamraigthe muintire nime.³⁸²

The verb used to translate *raptum est* is the perf. pass. 3g of *con-ocaib* ‘lifts up, raises, exalts’,³⁸³ followed in the next clause by *co cuala briathra diaisnéite* ‘he heard the untellable words’, for the original *audiuit arcana uerba*.³⁸⁴

The third example equally describes an experience involving the transportation of the visionaries to an alternate location:

(§9) ructha ... ind apstail uile ... co n-accatar piana ... coro fégtais ⁊ coro innithmigtis ifern cona ilphianaib³⁸⁵

The experience of their journey is described through the verbs *ructha*, perf. pass. 3pl of *beirid*, while the visual element is indicated by *co n-accatar*, as in *VL* above, but also by *fégaid* ‘look at, observe’, and *indithmigid* ‘contemplate’. The wording of these three examples is not merely important because it demonstrates how these visionary experiences were translated, but also because each represents a different type of vision. Paul’s vision, though he was taken up to the third heaven, is otherwise primarily auditory, whilst Peter does not travel at all; and the trip to the mouth of hell from the *Transitus* is perhaps a mixed type, in that the protagonists travel across the earth to gaze

³⁸¹ This same account of Peter’s experience in Acts 10:10 is used by Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* VII.viii.33-6 as an example of an *ecstasis*, as distinct from a *uisio* and a *somnium*.

³⁸² ‘The apostle Paul, moreover, was lifted up to the third heaven, so that he heard the untellable words of the angels, and the wonderful conversation of the household of heaven.’

³⁸³ gl. *est ... elatus*, *MI*. 32c1. *DIL* s.v. *con-ocaib*.

³⁸⁴ 2 Cor 12:2-4: *Scio hominem in Christo ante annos quattuordecim siue in corpore nescio siue extra corpus nescio, Deus scit. Raptum eiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum. Et scio huiusmodi hominem siue in corpore siue extra corpus nescio, Deus scit, quoniam raptus est in paradysum et audiuit arcana uerba quae non licet homini loqui*. ‘I knew a man in Christ more than fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth). Such a one was caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth), and how he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.’

³⁸⁵ ‘all of the apostles ... were taken to see the punishments ... so that they could gaze upon and contemplate hell with its many punishments.’ *Q* omits most of this sentence, adding only ⁊ *focraice nime* after *piana*. As per the source, the *Obsequies* (see n. 378), they are transported to the western ends of the earth.

on hell directly. Hence we observe that the author uses the general *foillsigidir* ‘reveals’ for Peter’s apparition, *con-ocaib* for ‘lifting up’ in the description of Paul’s experience, and *ructha ... co n-accatar* ‘were taken to see’ to describe the journey of the apostles.

These examples provide precedents both in language and content for the way in which the author presents the vision attributed to Adomnán himself. I would argue, therefore, that the chosen phraseology is indicative of how the author wished his audience to understand Adomnán’s vision (and how he understood it himself).³⁸⁶ We find similar phrasing with *ro foillsiged do* and *dia rucad* in the author’s descriptions of the vision in §10 (as well as *innithmugud* in §13), thus reinforcing its associations with the previously mentioned accounts verbally.³⁸⁷

(§10) Ro foillsiged dano fo deóid do Adamnán ua Thinne (...) aní pritchaither sunn, diaro escomla a ainimm asa churp i féil Iohain Baupstaist ⁊ dia rucad dochum ríchid co n-ainglib nime ⁊ ifirn cona doescursluag.³⁸⁸

However, the author also uses other terminology, such as *arthraigidir* ‘appear, manifest’ and *athascnaid* ‘return, revisit’. Once Adomnán’s soul left his body, an angel

ro arthraig fo chétóir di ... ⁊ ros-uc lais ar thús do athasnam flatha nime³⁸⁹

The use of *athasnam*, normally ‘returns, revisits’ here is unusual, but is confirmed by (§29) *athasnam co rígsuide in Dúileman* ‘to travel to the throne of the Creator’; (§39) *ro-uc lais í iar sin do athasnam iffirn iníchtaraig* ‘[the angel] took it [the soul] with him after that to visit the lowest hell’ and (§53) *iar n-athasnam flatha nime* ‘after visiting the kingdom of heaven’. The manuscript variants, however, also suggest a possible alternative emphasis: for §11 one reads *do dechain* ‘saw’ in *Y* and *do fegad* ‘saw’ in *LU* and *Q* instead of *athasnam*.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁶ I will refer to the author as ‘he’ throughout, but no explicit bias regarding sex is intended.

³⁸⁷ Also in §39 *Óro foillsig trá aingel in coímthechta do anmain Adomnáin na físi-sea* ‘After the guardian angel had revealed these visions to the soul of Adomnán’ and §53 *Is iat-sin na piana ⁊ na toidéirnama ro foillsig aingel in choímthechta do anmain Adomnán iar n-athasnam flatha nime* ‘Those are the punishments and tortures which the guardian angel revealed to the soul of Adomnán, after visiting the kingdom of heaven’.

³⁸⁸ ‘Finally, moreover, that which is preached here was revealed to Adomnán grandson of Tinne (...) when his soul passed out of his body on the feast of John the Baptist, and when it was borne to heaven with the angels of heaven, and to hell with its rabble host.’

³⁸⁹ ‘appeared to it at once ... and brought it with him first of all to visit the kingdom of heaven’ (§11)

³⁹⁰ *Y* continues the sentence with *⁊ ifirnd amal ro thaisbean dona hapstalaib*. The variants for §29 in *LU* and *Q* read *insaid ⁊ dula* ‘approach and go’ instead of *athasnam*, and for §39 they use *innsaid* again.

In the ‘Seven Heavens’ section, moreover, we are given detailed descriptions, but we are told very little about how the soul is thought to travel. In §38 we are told that it is archangels who bring the soul to heaven.³⁹¹ In §34 the souls of the righteous step (*cengait*) across a fire the width of twelve thousands cubit as if it were nothing, and in the next paragraph they ‘get across’ (*Ro-saiget tairis*) a whirlpool. Apart from that, we are told that a guardian angel (or Michael) brings them to the following doorway (§§33, 34, 35 [lifting the souls with his rod], 36).

Notwithstanding the extensive descriptions of places of the afterlife in *FA* and the portrayal of the journey of the soul through the seven heavens, Adomnán himself is notably absent from the journey, only appearing in a handful of paragraphs in the text. That the places described in the text are visited by Adomnán is nonetheless implicit in the text, and is made explicit by the phrases quoted above, which state that he visited the throne of the Creator, the kingdom of heaven and the lowest hell, and in the conclusion.³⁹² As a result of his ‘absence’, however, the narrative is driven primarily by descriptions of the geography of the afterlife, which are presented in great detail.

SVA

The SVA of Adomnán opens with the words:

Visio quam uidit Adamnanus uir Spiritu sancto plenus, hæc est,
angelus Domini dixit hæc uerba eius illum.³⁹³

This is followed by what appears to be a quote of the angel’s speech (still in Latin), in which the men of Ireland are warned of an approaching calamity. This is then paraphrased in Irish (§2) in order to introduce the proposed remedy to ward off this plague. The text reads specifically that this was ‘revealed to Adomnán úa Tinne’ (*ro foillsiged do Adamnán húa Thinne*),³⁹⁴ but it does not provide any further details concerning his visionary experience, which may have been purely auditory: despite

³⁹¹ §38 *comairge inna n-archaíngel lasa tucad co ríched*. Cf. §29 *Is annam trá lasin n-anmain ... athasnam co rígsuide in Dúileman acht mani dig la eólchu aingel* ‘it is indeed unusual for the soul ... to travel to the throne of the Creator, unless it go with angel guides’.

³⁹² In addition, there are a few minor references, such as §12 *Is ed dano cétna tír cosa ráncatar* ‘The first land to which they came’ and §40 *Is é iarum cétna tír frisa comráncatar* ‘This then is the first land which they encountered’. Both confirm that Adomnán would have been travelling with a guide.

³⁹³ ‘The vision which Adomnán, a man full of the Holy Spirit, saw, that is, the angel of the Lord said these words of his to him:’

³⁹⁴ Note that the same phrase is used in *FA* above, which, in the context, is not likely to be a coincidence.

the title, we are not told whether Adomnán actually *sees* an angel.³⁹⁵ In this regard, it is not dissimilar to the type of description we encounter in *FA* for the visions of Peter and Paul referred to above. No journey to the afterlife is described here, but instead the focus is on the message, which Adomnán apparently hears both from the angel and *a comarli Dé ocus Patraic* ‘through the council of God and Patrick’, and which is directed—through him—to the men of Ireland at large (§2).

This work, then, is a homily that has taken for its topic a prophetic vision of an approaching calamity. It is rather the perceived context implied by a *uisio* that the author is drawing on. He presents his homily simultaneously as the contents and explanation of the prophecy and its warning, and has blended these two elements in the text carefully. Are we, for instance, to imagine that the author had some prior knowledge of the souls of saints visiting churches at the canonical hours (§3), or of the Lord himself visiting the good churches on Sunday (§4), that he might have added to the text himself? Even if so, surely the description of the details of the prophesied plague (§4) could only have come from the vision. The author leaves the boundary between the contents of the vision and his own argument deliberately vague.

Lóchán

The vision of *Lóchán*, brief as it is, has both visual and journey elements. We are told *Lóchán* saw heaven, with the Lord on his throne, a birdflock of angels and Michael in the form of a bird, as well as hell with its rivers and monstrous creatures. The recurrent phrase in this text—it is repeated thrice—is *gu tarfas fis amra dho .i. a breith d'feghadh nimhe ⁊ ifirn* ‘a marvellous vision was shewn to him, to wit, he was taken to see heaven and hell’.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ The phrase *uisio uidit* here apparently means no more than ‘he had a vision’, though in the most general way. It is not impossible that the author was thinking of the extended meaning ‘revelation’.

³⁹⁶ Stokes, ‘The Voyage of the Húi Corra’, pp. 30-2.

VT

Marcus purports to relate to us the story of ‘the mystery which was shown to Tnugdál’, as it was related to him by Tnugdál himself.³⁹⁷ The VT is divided into twenty-seven sections, twenty-five of which deal with Tnugdál’s journey through the afterlife. After a brief introduction to the circumstances of the sudden onset of the vision, we find Tnugdál’s soul separated from his body, though it is initially still in the house where his body lies (as if) dead.³⁹⁸ The first part of the journey is mainly conducted by following the angel along a path. There is no hint, at this point, to indicate whether they are in fact in heaven, hell or elsewhere, until at the end of the punishment for immoderacy—the seventh punishment in the upper hell—where it is said that their dark path now *quasi de cacumine altissimi montis in precipitium semper descendens*.³⁹⁹ It becomes clear then that they have been walking through the upper hell,⁴⁰⁰ with minor punishments (*minora*), and are going down into the lower hell (with, it is implied, major punishments). All the while, they appear to be walking—the Latin is no more specific than ‘*pergerent*’ or ‘*uenit*’.⁴⁰¹ The path along which they progress takes Tnugdál past an extensive series of punishments, before moving on to the Prince of Darkness in the lower hell and subsequently to more pleasant realms. It culminates in the highest level of heaven, where the Lord resides. As the path would suggest, they are continuously moving in a linear trajectory and progress horizontally for a large part of it. However, both the upper and lower hell and the (for lack of better terminology) upper and lower heaven are demarcated with a twofold descent and ascent respectively.⁴⁰² In addition, Tnugdál must climb the wall of precious stones to reach the highest level of heaven.⁴⁰³ These downwards and upwards

³⁹⁷ *misterium quod ostensum fuerat Tugdalo ... Scripsimus autem uobis fideliter prout nobis ipse qui uiderat eandem uisionem retulit. Pfeil, p. 2; Tnugdál, pp. 109-10.*

³⁹⁸ *Tnugdál, p. 114; Pfeil, p. 10.*

³⁹⁹ *Pfeil, p. 30.* ‘was continuously going down as if from the top of the highest mountain to an abyss’.

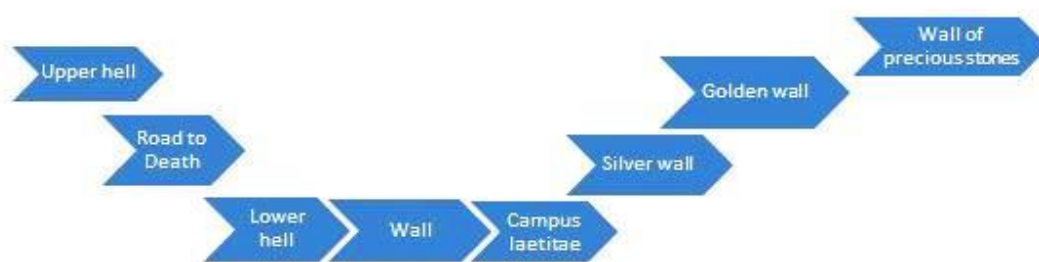
⁴⁰⁰ On the validity of this term see 4.2.1 below, p. 205.

⁴⁰¹ E.g. *Pfeil, pp. 12, 33, 36, 41 (=Tnugdál, pp. 117, 135, 138, 141).*

⁴⁰² E.g. a second descent in §8: *Omnes quos uidisti superius ... namque non peruenisti ad inferos inferiores* ‘the people you have seen above ... for, you have not yet reached the lower hell.’, *Pfeil, p. 33; Tnugdál, pp. 133-4*; and an ascent in §17 *ascendamus* ‘let us go up’, *Pfeil, p. 46; Tnugdál, p. 146*; and in §18: *Oportet nos adhuc ascendere; et illa que superius sunt uidere* (48) ‘We must ascend further to see what is above’. *Pfeil, p. 48; Tnugdál, p. 147.*

⁴⁰³ de Pontfarcy points out that there appears not to be a height difference going up to the wall, but the wall itself must nevertheless be climbed. *Tnugdál, p. 57.*

movements suggest that most of these interim areas are, in effect, placed in a netherworld.⁴⁰⁴ One might, in fact portray the journey schematically as follows.⁴⁰⁵



The linear aspect of the journey is reinforced by Tnugdál's (or Marcus') repeated statements of progression: 'going a little further', 'moving forward a little further', and so on.⁴⁰⁶ At a few points in the story, Tnugdál is said to move (or be moved) in some unexplainable manner. When this happens he is unable to tell how: for instance, when he comes out of the belly of the beast Acheron,⁴⁰⁷ when he finds himself stuck on the bridge with the soul carrying the sheaves,⁴⁰⁸ and again when he is tortured in the house of Phristinus.⁴⁰⁹ In short, the overall style of the vision could be summarised with Marcus' own words: *ueni et uide*.⁴¹⁰

TPP

Like *VT*, *TPP* constitutes a lengthy journey, but one would be justified in asking *where* Owein actually journeys. He does not exactly experience a vision here so much as he enters into a pit in the ground. However, the existence of this pit, the author tells us, was itself the subject of a revelation to Saint Patrick:

Beatus uero Patricius, Deo deuotus, etiam tunc pro salute populi
deuotior in uigiliis, ieiuniis et orationibus, atque operibus bonis

⁴⁰⁴ Assuming that at the start of the vision, when Tnugdál leaves his body, he remains at the level of the earth. This would seem to be suggested by the fact that Tnugdál find himself—as a soul—standing beside his body. Pfeil recognises in Marcus' scheme a vertical arrangement that suggests a vertically oriented universe (p. 213).

⁴⁰⁵ This representation is purely schematic and I do not purport to make any assumptions regarding relative horizontal distance, as the text does not provide us with enough information to determine it.

⁴⁰⁶ E.g. Pfeil; *Et euntes paululum*, p. 42; *Et procedentes paululum*, p.43; *Cum autem modicum procederent*, p. 44; *Et cum paululum processissent*, p.46.

⁴⁰⁷ *nescia quo ordine exierat. se extra bestiam esse sentiebat*. Pfeil, p. 17.

⁴⁰⁸ *nescientes quomodo sed unaqueque alteram pertransisse cognoscebat*. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁰⁹ *Sed quando diuino numini placuit. nesciens quo ordine sicut diximus. extra tormenta esse se sentit*. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

effectus est. Et quidem dum talibus pro salute populi intenderet bonis, pius dominus Ihesus Christus ei uisibiliter apparuit ... Sanctum uero Patricium Dominus in locum desertum eduxit, et unam fossam rotundam et intrinsecus obscuram ibidem ei ostendit, dicens, quia quisquis ueraciter penitens uera fide armatus fossam eandem ingressus, unius diei ac noctis spacio moram in ea faceret, ab omnibus purgaretur tocius uite sue peccatis, sed et per illam transiens non solum uisurus esset tormenta malorum uerum etiam, si in fide constanter egisset, gaudia beatorum.⁴¹¹

We have here, then, at once the description of a separate revelation and an explanation of what will happen to those who enter the pit. It may be noted that Patrick's experience has a familiar pattern: just as some of the previous visionaries discussed, Patrick sees a supernatural character—in this case the Lord Jesus—who carried him away (*eduxit*) to another location and revealed (*ostendit*) something to him. Patrick is not shown the places of the afterlife, however, but is told where others may go to see them. Patrick's experience, then, is perhaps best classified as an apparition or revelation rather than a vision. According to Jesus himself, any penitent and faithful person entering the pit will not only be purged, but will also see the torments of the wicked and the joys of the blessed,⁴¹² as the Irish had requested of Patrick.

The implication is that Owein is taken to the places of the afterlife. Since Owein enters a pit, we might expect these places to be underground, and indeed, regarding this point the author himself clarifies his position:

Et quidem infernus subtus terram uel infra terre concauitatem quasi carcer et ergastulum tenebrarum a quibusdam esse creditur, narratio ista nichilominus asseritur.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ *Easting*, p. 124, ll. 114-134. 'So, blessed Patrick, devoted to God, became even more dedicated for the salvation of this people by doing vigils, fasts, prayers and good deeds. And while he was striving towards this good for the salvation of the people, the pious Lord Jesus Christ visibly appeared to him ... So the Lord took saint Patrick to a deserted place. There he showed to him a round pit, dark inside, and said to him that whoever, being truly repentant and armed with true faith, would enter this pit and remain for the duration of one day and one night, would be purged of all the sins of his life. Moreover, while going through it, he would see not only the torments of the wicked, but also, if he acted constantly according to the faith, the joys of the blessed.' *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 47-8.

⁴¹² Elsewhere in the text this is repeated in slightly different words: *non solum a peccatis omnibus purgaberis, uerum etiam tormenta, que preparantur peccatoribus, et requiem, in qua iusti letantur, uidebis* 'not only will you be purified of all your sins but you will even see the torments which are in store for sinners and the place of rest in which the just rejoice'. *Easting*, p. 128, ll. 288-90.

⁴¹³ *Easting*, p. 122, ll. 51-4. 'Furthermore this account confirms what is believed by some, namely that hell is under the earth or rather at the bottom of a cavity in the earth, like a dungeon or a prison of darkness.' *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 45.

Though the idea of locating (at least some of) the places of the afterlife in the netherworld is not novel, Tnugdál's method of travelling reflects a deliberate attempt on the part of the author to steer away from the notion of a supernatural vision.⁴¹⁴ As we will see below, the emphasis is on Owein's journey in the body, rather than as a departed soul. After he has received advice from fifteen men dressed in white, the devils appear and Owein is dragged away and taken on a tour of ten different torments. He successfully manages to release himself each time and ultimately arrives at a very steep bridge. There he is finally able to shake off the devils and, confident in his faith, to walk up to the top of the bridge to the earthly paradise. Having been properly instructed there, he walks back out of the pit the same way he came.

Conclusions

The distribution of the elements of vision and journey may be summarised in the following table.

Table 2 Manner: Vision and Journey

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	Lóchán	VT	TPP
1.1 Vision	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1.2.1 Journey	(•)	•	•	(•)	•		•	•	•

The evidence from the visions shows, from a typological point of view, that all of the texts contain a 'vision', combined, in all but one case, with a journey element. If we count the smaller accounts within these larger narratives as well, this becomes eleven out of thirteen.⁴¹⁵ On a narrative level, however, these elements do not always carry equal weight and the emphasis often falls on either of the two. The journey element takes precedence in *Red. VI*, which emphasises the sequence of places visited, whilst *Red. XI* emphasises seeing and observing. The visual element is perhaps more

⁴¹⁴ There are, furthermore, some minor indications that the author perhaps does not wholeheartedly approve of speculation regarding the afterlife: e.g. 'I would not venture into such matters were I not under orders' (*Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 43) and 'Because these things have been concealed from us, it is better to fear them than to inquire about them' (p. 44). At the same time, his introduction shows that he is well aware of other examples of visionary literature and summarises Gregory's position on this matter at length.

⁴¹⁵ *SVA* does not contain a journey element, nor does the account of Peter's vision from Acts in *FA*. Of course, the smaller accounts in *FA* are only representations of their source, but these are models the author had in mind when writing and they are for that reason included here.

dominant in *VF* and perhaps the auditory in *SVA*, where we can hardly speak of a tour at all. In *FA*, in the absence of a visionary moving through the various areas of the afterworld, it is more difficult to speak of an emphasis on journeying. Yet the author states repeatedly that Adomnán is taken to heaven to visit (*athascnam*)⁴¹⁶ the various regions and his preoccupation with these is expressed in the detailed geographical descriptions. In *Lóchán*—to the extent that we can draw any real conclusions from a text this short—a more equal balance is struck between the two, and so too in *VL*, *VT* and *TPP*, where the integration of vision and journey provides the backdrop for the scene descriptions. Of the smaller visions, the account of Paul (*FA*) arguably betrays a focus on the journey aspect, while the accounts of the *Transitus* (*FA*) and Patrick (*TPP*) are rather of the mixed type. That said, the vision of Patrick ends with *ab oculis eius Domino disparente* ‘the disappearance of the Lord from before his eyes’.⁴¹⁷ This, to my mind, sounds most like an apparition. In all four cases, however, the textual evidence is limited.

There is also notable variation in the direction of travel, where this is indicated. The conventional idea that one goes ‘up to heaven’ is upheld in most of the visions, but with certain limitations. First, it appears that upwards movement is primarily associated with the moment at which the soul leaves the body (scenario A below). In the case of *VT*, however, the soul remains near its body in the first instance, and does not appear to move up once the angel comes to fetch him. In the remainder of the journey (B) there is only a limited amount of information given regarding the route the visionary takes and whether it involves vertical or horizontal movement, with two notable exceptions. In *FA* we can observe an upwards movement in the section on the seven heavens (indicated by *dréimm*, §30), followed by the casting down of the sinful soul into Satan’s maws. This is, furthermore, coupled with a number of references elsewhere in the text (but mainly in the *exordium*) indicating that the righteous are lifted up and sinners are cast down. In *VT* we can observe a clear downwards movement associated with the descent further into the unpleasant realms of hell followed by an upwards movement when visiting the pleasant realms of heaven. This downwards movement would appear to be paralleled in *VL* and *TPP*, depending on one’s interpretation of whether or not

⁴¹⁶ Or *innsaigid*. See variants quoted above, n. 390.

⁴¹⁷ *Easting*, p. 124, l. 134; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 48.

descent is necessarily involved in entering a cave. However, the textual evidence is unclear in both cases, leading me to assign them question marks in the table below.

There are only unspecific references to horizontal movement, associated with crossing valleys (*VL*, *TPP*) or implied by the following of a path (*VT*). In these cases, there appears to be no direct correlation to entering a place in either heaven or hell, but the movement rather applies to the journey itself. However, it seems that Patrick (*TPP*) and the apostles of the *Transitus* (*FA*) were, at the start of their visions, transported to a different location on earth rather than in heaven (though in the *Transitus* they travel on a cloud), thus also apparently travelling horizontally. Generally, however, with the exception of *VT* and the seven heavens section of *FA*, the texts tend to remain rather evasive regarding the route one takes once in the afterworld.

Table 3 Direction of the Journey

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	Lóchán	VT	TPP
A	up	up	up	up*	up - (Peter) up (Paul) ? (apostles)	?	?	-	n/a horizontal (Patrick)
B		down(?) horizontal(?)			up down			down up	down(?) up horizontal(?)

* quoting 2 Cor 12

Directionality

We have seen that in *FA*, *VT* and *TPP* the visit to hell and the areas of punishment is associated with descending and the visit to the heavenly realms with ascending. Beyond this, it is hard to get a sense of direction in the narratives. Only three texts refer explicitly to directions in relation to the journey or the landscape, of which *FA* is most detailed. Carey suggests that the location of the wondrous kingdom (*flaith adamra*) with the heavenly household may perhaps also refer to the location of the sunrise at the winter solstice (as it does in Bede's account of Dryhthelm's vision in *HE* V.12⁴¹⁸ and here in *TPP*) or alternatively, may refer to Rome.⁴¹⁹ A northward direction is the way to hell in *VL* and the direction of the punishment of the north

⁴¹⁸ Carey, *op. cit.*, note to §14,1. See further the notes to §12 for Carey's discussion of various possible sources for the four-part division of the land of the saints.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.* and Carey, *A Vision*.

wind in both *FA* and *TPP*. The scope and sequence of the journey receive further attention in 4.1 below.

Table 4 Directionality

VL	FA	TPP
north (along a great valley §8)	all four cardinal directions (land of saints §12; the Lord enthroned §21) southeast (location of household of heaven in relation to the land of saints §14) north (punishment of north wind §45)	towards sunrise at midsummer (NE) and midwinter (SE) (§7) north (punishment of north wind §13, 8 th torment)

There is, however, another element to be taken into consideration. It is evident, upon comparison, that a small number of the visions discussed here, mainly *VF*, *Red. VI.*, the accounts of Peter and Paul in *FA*, and *SVA* are more overtly concerned with receiving and conveying a message than with ‘seeing’ a vision as such. In these visions, the protagonist is, in effect, either raised up to heaven or given a revelation in order to pass on information. Paul’s account in 2 Cor purports to declare a journey, but the most important element of this vision is the ‘unutterable words’ that have sparked so much speculation.⁴²⁰ Equally, Fursa is transported up to heaven only in order to learn about the importance of penance and confession; and Adomnán, in *SVA*, is given a revelation purely for the purposes of warning the Irish about the consequences of their sinful lifestyle. The visions of Peter in Acts 10 and Paul in 2 Cor, which are referred to in the prologue to *FA* and served as models of inspiration for its author, are exemplary in this regard, since both convey a manner of revelation that emphasizes the divine message. In that sense, those visions with a stronger emphasis on the message conveyed, may perhaps be considered more conservative and more Biblical in tone than other visions discussed here.

⁴²⁰ This is true in particular of the vision of Peter in Acts 10 (where it is, moreover, not Peter who goes up, but the object of his vision that comes down to him). Along with the four-cornered vessel he hears God’s voice, informing him about the new standard food regulations. In *FA* this element is downplayed in order to highlight the visual aspect.

3.1.3 Manner of Revelation: Auditory

*Scrutares et queres in homnibus!*⁴²¹

—*Visio Sancti Pauli* §30

The third aspect of revelation to be discussed is that of voice. It has already been mentioned a number of times above that a certain amount of conversation takes place between the visionary and his guide. Here I take a closer look at the function of this element in the structure of the texts. In the following discussion, I have distinguished between the roles of monologic and dialogic speech in the text, as well as between speech acts between different characters, with a view to analysing their respective functions. Although a certain amount of subjectivity is inevitable in assessing scene composition, I am taking a scene to be a sequence of addresses (and responses in a dialogue) logically belonging together. To reflect the complexity of the scenes of the dialogues and their relative importance in the overall narrative, I also on occasion refer to units of address, these being the individual utterances that make up the dialogue. For this purpose, I only count units presented in direct speech. To give an example, the following quotation from *Red. XI* (§7) is one scene, containing two units.

And I questioned the angel and he said: “Lord, Lord, who is that old man?” The angel responded to me and he said: “He is a bishop who did not perform the right words in his life nor did he have mercy nor piety nor kindness nor did he carry out a prayer nor vigils nor fasts in his life.”

However, a scene may comprise several addresses and replies prior to its conclusion. I also note the extent to which dialogues involving the visionary have a question-and-answer format, as this structure has a long tradition as an explanatory device in both Jewish and Christian literature.

VF

In *VF* we encounter a significant amount of speech, which can be classified as different types of monologue or dialogue, each with their own internal structuring. Most of the monologues are allocated to Beoán and Meldán, while the greater part of

⁴²¹ “You ask questions about everything!”. As in *P*, Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 134; *ANT*, p. 632.

the dialogues are not between Fursa and the angel, or even between Fursa and Beoán and Meldán, but between the angel and the devil (with his companions). In total, there are ten scenes of conversation in the narrative, in four of which monologue plays a role and eight of which contain dialogue. There are, in fact, three different types of dialogic structures in this text: dialogues initiated by Fursa (only once); dialogues initiated by addressing Fursa and dialogues that do not involve Fursa at all.

Fursa and the angels

Fursa is seen to address the angels only once, in his first vision, when he realises for the first time that he has been taken out of the body. He then inquires of one of the angels where he is being taken and expresses his dismay when he learns he will be sent back:

(§3) Tunc primo uir sanctus se corpore exutum cognoscens, sanctis comitibus quo se deferebant inquit; sanctusque angelus a dextris consistens dixit eum oportere proprium corpus suscipere, quoadusque debitam reportaret sollicitudinem. Tunc uir sanctus tedio separandi a societate angelica affectus dixit se ab eis separare noluisse. Angelus Domini sanctus respondit: “Ad te, completa praedicta sollicitudine, suscipiendum reuertemur.”⁴²²

What is notable about this conversation is that, while it is a straightforward dialogue, it is almost entirely—the last line excluded—presented through indirect speech. This is typical of much of the dialogue involving Fursa and, in fact, he is never seen to address the angel with a question in direct speech—where his utterances are presented in direct speech (twice), they are turned into affirmative statements instead of questions. This is important because much of the dialogue or monologue addressed to him concerns explanations and instructions, but also because of what it tells us about the status of the visionary.

There are three scenes in which the angel initiates a dialogue with Fursa. The paragraph which deals with the four fires begins with the angel inviting Fursa to look down (*respice mundum*). The angel then asks Fursa:

⁴²² ‘Only then did the holy man, understanding that he had put off the body, inquire of his holy companions where they took him. The holy angel standing at his right hand said that it was fitting that he should resume his own body until he should complete his due task. Then the holy man, overcome with grief at parting from the angelic fellowship, said he desired not to part from them. The holy angel of the Lord replied: ‘When thou hast finished the aforesaid task, we shall return to take thee up.’

“Qui sunt hi ignes?” Vir Domini se nescire respondit. Cui angelus dixit: “Hi sunt quattuor ignes qui mundum succendunt.”⁴²³

Fearing the fire, Fursa tells the angel

“Ignis mihi adpropinquat.” Cui respondit angelus: “Quod non accendisti non ardebit in te.”⁴²⁴

In this passage the angel is the leading participant, both asking the questions and providing the answers. Fursa’s response is first given as an indirect statement, and subsequently as an observation in direct speech. The pattern in this passage is mirrored by a passage in paragraph eleven, when Fursa is inundated with bright light coming through a door which the angels use as passageway.

(§11) Tunc sanctus angelus stans a dextris eius dixit: “Scis ubi agitur haec laetitia et gaudium?” Illo respondente se nescire, sanctus angelus respondit: “Apud supernum conuentum, unde et nos sumus.” Tunc ... ammiransque ait: “Magnum est gaudium haec auscultare carmina.”⁴²⁵

To this the angel then gives two answers, explaining that they are often deprived of this joy because they minister to humans (*ministerio dispensationis humanae*) and that there is no sadness in the heavenly kingdom ‘unless by reason of the perdition of men’ (*nisi de hominum perditione*, §11). In this dialogue, the angel again begins with a question in direct speech (#); Fursa’s answer is presented in indirect speech (*); the angel answers his own question (in direct speech, †); subsequently Fursa’s reaction is presented in an affirmative observation in direct speech (^), to which the angel provides an explanation (in direct speech, †). The structure of the dialogue can thus be illustrated as follows:

⁴²³ §8 ‘What be these fires?’ The man of the Lord replied that he did not know. The angel said to him: ‘These be the four fires that burn up the world.’ Sims-Williams is of the opinion that *mundus* here ought to be translated as ‘mankind’, but does not offer parallels. (*Religion*, p. 254). However, he points out that it was read as ‘world’ and so translated by in Bede (though he considers Bede’s phrase ambiguous) and certainly by Ælfric. It may be noted that Rackham and Groves translate as ‘world’. Since *mundum* is itself indeed ambiguous and the idea remains more or less the same, I do not think it necessary to prioritise either reading.

⁴²⁴ “‘The fire approaches me.’ To which the angel replied: “That which you have not kindled, shall not burn you.”

⁴²⁵ ‘Then the holy angel standing at his right hand said: “Do you know where this joy and happiness be accomplished?” He replied that he did not know. The holy angel responded: “Among the heavenly congregation, whence are we.” Then ... marvelling he said: “Great is the joy to listen unto these songs.”’

(§8) #Qui sunt hi ignes?#
 Vir domini se nescire respondit.
 Cui angelus dixit: †Hi sunt quattuor ignes
qui mundum succendunt.†
 Timensque ignem minacem ... ait: ^Ignis
mihi adpropinquat.^
 Cui respondit angelus: †Quod non
accendisti non ardebit in te.†

(§11) #Scis ubi agitur haec laetitia et
gaudium?#
 Illo respondente se nescire,
 sanctus angelus respondit: †Apud
supernum conuentum, unde et nos sumus.†
 Tunc ... ammiransque ait: ^Magnum est
gaudium haec auscultare carmina^
 Cui dixit angelus domini: †Hoc auditu nos
pro ministerio dispensationis humanae
saepe priuamur, et quod nos adnuntiando
laboramus, daemonia humana corrumpendo
corda dissipant. ... In hoc caelesti regno
nulla umquam tristitia nisi de hominum
perditione fieri potest.†

The conversational structure of both these scenes, in which Fursa's voice is subdued in relation to the angel's voice, highlights Fursa's lower status. In fact, the dialogue suggests Fursa is only there to observe and listen. The angel's predominance as the agent of the conversation is furthermore reflected in the higher ratio of his active utterances. Both these conversations mark highly important scenes within the narrative: the first explains to Fursa the four fires that burn up the world, the second the origin of the heavenly joy he experiences and the connection between heaven and earth. The mirroring of dialogue in these two scenes creates a contrast between them, and thereby between earth and heaven, also reflected in Fursa's reaction: in the first scene he shrinks away from the fire he sees on earth below him in fear, in the second scene his soul is said to have glowed (*circumfulsit*) at the sweetness of the heavenly music.⁴²⁶ This could be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the soul's natural proclivity to return to its maker, and shrink away from everything worldly and, potentially, sinful.⁴²⁷

The third example would appear to aspire to the same structure, but falls short of it somewhat. At the end of the vision (§17), we are told that the angel commanded Fursa to take back his body, which he was reluctant to do. Here the text reads that 'the angel replied' that he had no reason to fear, for his body will be free

⁴²⁶ (§11) *Tunc anima illius ad dulcedinem superni modolaminis ac sonitum ineffabilis laetitiae ... intendens, circumfulsit.*

⁴²⁷ This notion resurfaces throughout the Middle Ages in texts on the dialogue between the body and the soul; often the soul is found accusing or attacking the body on account of its sinful behaviour and worldly aspirations. See now e.g. Wright, C.D., 'Latin Analogues for *The Dialogue of the Body and the Soul*', in Carey, J., et al. (eds.), *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (forthcoming); Carey, J. (ed. and trans.), 'The Dialogue of the Body and the Soul', in Carey, J., et al., *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (forthcoming).

of illness and he has overcome all his old sins.⁴²⁸ Up to the angel's reply, the entire conversation is related in the third person and we are hardly even aware that a conversation is going on. Nor is Fursa's ensuing observation that his body is now open (i.e. ready to receive back the soul) presented as a direct statement. It is, however, still followed by an utterance from the angel, instructing him what he is to do upon his revival. It is possible that the structure here is due to the more instructional tone of the passage, which indeed verges on monologue.

There are two further cases in the narrative where Fursa is addressed by the angel, where this does not lead to a dialogue. The first of these is an attempt by the angel to console Fursa and take away his anxieties over the fire approaching him. The angel at his right tells him *Noli timere, defensionem habes* 'Do not fear, you have a defence' (§6). Just before the end of the vision, after he has received a burn, the angel addresses Fursa twice to instruct him: first, the angel reveals why he was burned (namely, that the fire was in fact 'that which you have kindled') and reminds him again of the rules regarding handling property (§16); and second, to tell him he ought to pour spring water over his body and to assure him they will eventually return to take him up (§17).⁴²⁹ In these examples, the tone is decidedly instructive.

Fursa and the saints

This tone is continued in the next two sections, spanning paragraphs thirteen to fourteen, in which two saints, Beoán and Meldán, tell Fursa about the vices and their remedies, and paragraph fifteen, in which Beoán gives Fursa advice. These sections are entirely monologic and have a purely didactic and instructive purpose. The first of these sections follows Fursa's experience of the pleasant music of the heavenly congregation and is preceded by a short dialogue. When Fursa sees the two saints coming towards him, and they announce to him that he has to return to earth, he appears sad and the saints address him (in direct speech), asking why he is fearful. They tell him his labour is only short, and urge him to preach that punishment is at

⁴²⁸ (§17) *iubeturque ab angelo proprium cognoscere et resumere corpus. Tunc ille ... timens, noluit se ibidem adpropinquare. Cui respondit angelus: 'Noli timere ...'*

⁴²⁹ The angels tells him they will watch him do good (*benefaciens*) until the end (*usque ad finem*), meaning perhaps 'until his death'.

hand.⁴³⁰ We are then told that Fursa asks them about the end of the age. His question here, in effect, functions as the trigger for the ensuing monologues.

The angel and the devil

One of the most striking aspects of *VF* is the extensive battle of words that is fought between the angel protecting Fursa and the Devil, trying to obtain him. This battle covers paragraphs six to ten, being interrupted by the description of the four fires in paragraph eight. Fursa and his angel guide meet the Devil immediately upon their arrival. The angel's opening statement can serve to illustrate their stance in the argument: *Nolite tardare iter nostrum, quia hic homo non est particeps perditionis uestrae* (§6).⁴³¹ The Devil, however, maintains that *Si iustus est deus, hic homo non intrabit in regnum caelorum* (§7).⁴³² The debate is too lengthy to recapitulate here in its entirety, but its structure is reasonably straightforward. It consists of numerous arguments back and forth, based on interpretation of quotations from Scripture, punctuated by battles between the angels and the devils (won by the angels every time) or requests—it seems—from the angel for their case to be judged before the Lord (*iudicemur ante dominum*). The entirety of the dialogue is presented as direct speech, which goes some way to illustrate its relative importance in the text. It consists of 38 units of address and as mentioned, spans multiple paragraphs.

The sequence of the dialogue seems somewhat arbitrary on occasion, but the distribution of the battle scenes and judgement scenes—if that is how we are to interpret them—together with the pause created by the four fires section divide the dialogue quite neatly into seven separate scenes. Indeed, this arrangement is confirmed by one of the manuscripts in which *VF* is preserved. Ciccarese records in her apparatus that manuscript *C* starts §6 with '*incipit septem pugna contra animam illius*' and ends §10 with '*finiuntur septem pugnatu contra animam Fursei*'.⁴³³ Their content will be discussed below; here it will suffice to say that they centre on the refutation of sins, in which the acceptance of property and pastoral duties play an

⁴³⁰ (§12) '*Quid times? unius diei iter est, quod laboraturus es. Praedicans ergo omnibus adnuntia quia in proximo est uindicta.*'

⁴³¹ 'Delay not our journey, for this man is no partaker of your perdition'.

⁴³² 'If the Lord be just, this man shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven'.

⁴³³ Ciccarese, 'Le visioni di S. Fursa', pp. 258, 291. It is also noteworthy that manuscript *S* and its derivatives as recorded by Ciccarese open §10 with *uictus sex uicibus inimicus*, which is actually rather premature as the start of §10 coincides with the start of the sixth section.

important role. The dialogue ends with victory for the angels. Partially to anticipate the discussion below, it is hard to avoid to the conclusion that Fursa is, in fact, tried for each of these accusations as if he were really dead. We may presume, however, that the fact that he is not dead contributes to his successful defence. It is not until the battle sequence concludes satisfactorily that Fursa is introduced to Beoán and Meldán and experiences the joy of heaven.

To summarise then, we may observe that discourse elements are highly important to both the structure and the argument in the text. This is demonstrated by the high number of units or paragraphs allocated to them in the text as whole: all of the paragraphs relating the vision contain or consist entirely of either dialogue or monologue. While Fursa himself speaks once with the saints, their encounter is primarily characterised by monologue, while his relationship with the angel is characterised by both. Furthermore, the angel's utterances serve the purpose of explaining what is happening to Fursa, what he is seeing, and what he ought to do when he returns to life; while the sole purpose of Beoán and Meldán appears to be to furnish Fursa with information regarding God's greater plan and directions for proper living, both for himself and others. The functions of psychopomp and teacher would thus appear to be divided between the angel and the saints. Both dialogue and monologue, however, in their different ways, serve to explain features of the afterlife and comment on the causal relationship between human behaviour on earth and one's fate in the afterworld. The question and answer sequences in the text contribute to the explanatory aspect of the text, though it is noteworthy that only half the questions in the text are asked by Fursa.

Table 5 Monologue and Dialogue in VF

Monologue No. of scenes	Who?	Dialogue no. of scenes (and units)				
		<i>Visionary and guide</i>	<i>Visionary and other character</i>	<i>Between other characters</i>	<i>Questions (involving Fursa)</i>	<i>Explanations (Fursa)</i>
4	Angel* Beoán Meldán	3(10)	1(1)	2(38)	6/3 [‡]	10

[‡] *Questions to the right of the solidus / are not asked by Fursa.*

VL

The *VL*, fragmentary as it is, likewise contains monologue, dialogue between Laisrén and the angel, and dialogue between the angel and a demon; an arrangement which it appears to have borrowed from or modelled on *VF*. The narrative opens with a description of how Laisrén is addressed by the angel appearing in the church. The angel tells him to arise and to come to him. No dialogue takes place at this point. Subsequently he sees the devil's troops readying themselves for battle, and one of them begins pleading a long plea against him. We are not told, however, what he is accused of, other than that it concerns sins which he had not previously confessed. The remainder of the dialogue consists of five utterances exchanged between the angel and one of the demons. As in *VF*, this discussion concerns the visionary's entitlement to entry to heaven and the consequences of sins left unconfessed or not atoned for. In his plea it is said of the demonic accuser that *nocha targart fuirri gach ni do-rad a coibsean do anmcarait re ndul a curp*.⁴³⁴ This is contested by the angel however: *Nin cumcafa a tacra n-i-sin o da-rat a coibseana ⁊ a peinne do reir anmcharat re tuidecht a curp*.⁴³⁵ After the angel informs the demons that Laisrén is not there to stay, but only to take home a warning (§§ 5-7), they leave and Laisrén is sent on his tour of hell.

The dialogue here could, in a way, be interpreted as a condensed variant of that in *VF* and, in the light of the discussion of the relationship between the two texts, we may note that, in addition to the general similarity of the first part of *VL* to that of *VF*, certain phrases in the dialogue *VL* can be read as paraphrases of *VF*. Compare, for instance,

(*VF* §6) quia hic homo non est particeps perditionis uestrae ('for this man is no partaker of your perdition')

with (VL §5) Ni fuil cuid duib isin fer-sa. ('You have no portion in this man.')

and (VF §7) Si iustus est deus, hic homo non intrabit in regnum caelorum Scriptum est enim: '*Nisi conuersi fueritis et efficiamini sicut paruuli, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum*'. ('If the Lord be just, this man shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. For it is written; "Unless

⁴³⁴ 'he had not mentioned against [Laisrén's soul] anything which it had confessed to a confessor before going from the body'.

⁴³⁵ 'That plea will have no power over us, for he has made his confession and his penances according to the will of a confessor before leaving the body.'

you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”)⁴³⁶

with (VL §6) ‘Mad fír briathar Dé,’ ol an dæmon, ‘ní sceram an cruth-sa. Ar ní derna an fer-sa nuídin dé amail don-immarngart Dia dó, *did*sens: *nisi conuersi fueritis 7 efitiamini sicut paruali non inntrabit in regnum celorum.*’ (‘If the word of God be true,’ said the demon, ‘we shall not part thus. For this man has not made an infant of himself as God demanded of him, saying “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”’)

In neither case is the correspondence exact; but the resemblance is close, as is the general line of argument. The difference between the two texts lies perhaps predominantly in the fact that it is immediately clear in *VL* that Laisrén is only in the afterworld as a visitor, summoned from his body to take a message back to earth.

Laisrén’s tour of hell includes dialogue between Laisrén and the angel. Having arrived at the porch (*erportach*) and the doorway (*dorus*) of hell, Laisrén asks about the people he sees there and a series of question-and-answer scenes begins, of which now only the first two survive. The questions we have seek explanations for what he sees, and instructions on what to do with this information. In the first scene, when he sees the souls of the Irish who are *i n-etail Dé* ‘under God’s displeasure’, the explanation of the scene is followed by a second question, in which Laisrén inquires what he ought to tell them when he returns, again reaffirming his set task of carrying a message back. Once Laisrén arrives in hell itself, he desires to know the distinction between the punishments—the question is, however, not expressed in direct speech because Laisrén only thinks it and the angel reads his mind. The little we have of this text portrays the angel both as guide and teacher and suggests the dialogues direct the focus toward explanations of the test awaiting the soul after death, the punishments of the afterlife and the visionary’s own role in communicating this information.

Table 6 Monologue and Dialogue in VL

Monologue		Dialogue				
No. of scenes	Who?	Visionary and guide	Visionary and other character	Between other characters	Questions (involving)	Explanations (Laisrén)
3	Angel	2(6)	-	2(5)	3	4

⁴³⁶ Matt. 18:3. For the sake of homogeneity I have used the Douay-Rheims translation for both quotes.

Red. VI

As mentioned above, *Red. VI* consists almost entirely of a series of scenes with a threefold structure comprising: i. a description of what Paul sees; ii. a question; iii. an answer. Consequently, most of the work is taken up by dialogue between Paul and an angel. The text contains no less than eleven scenes of dialogue—that is, one in each of the paragraphs—in total consisting of 32 utterances. It finishes with a single utterance addressed to Paul by the Lord himself, in response to Paul’s plea that he might join the fate of his ancestors in hell. At two points in the text, it deviates from this otherwise fixed pattern.

In paragraph six we get three question-and-answer sequences before the scene comes to an end. Here, Paul’s questions are concerned with further details of the nature and consequences of the punishment at hand; these do not immediately bear on the scene of torture in front of him, but rather explain the rules of penance for those involved. Those punished are clergy partially submerged in lead. The angel explains they are guilty of such sins as breaking vows of chastity, swearing falsely in church and war-like behaviour.⁴³⁷ Paul then asks how they may make amends for their sins,⁴³⁸ to which the angel answers that they ought to do penance while alive (*Agat paenitentiam dum aduixerit*). Desiring more detail, Paul then again asks how clergy specifically (naming all the types of clergy mentioned earlier in the text) may make amends for their sins. To this the angel answers:

(§6) Annos quattuor iaceas a terra pura, duas super lapide, *et ipsos annos iniusto paciant*⁴³⁹ famem apud panem *et sale et aqua et parcet ei Dominus peccatum suum.*⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ *Respondit ei angelus: “Isti sunt, qui castitatem infrigerunt et sacrificium Christi ore debaiolauerunt et in ecclesias periurauerunt, fuisse et belinque fuerunt, numquam paenituerunt; propter hoc credunt mala paenitentia uel graue pœnæ.”* The angel answered him: “These are [those] who broke [their vow of] chastity and vomited out(?) the offering of Christ by mouth and swore false oaths in church, who were thieving(?) and war-like, [and] never repented; because of this they pay with bad penance or grave punishment.” (See further Appendix E).

⁴³⁸ He asks specifically how those who break their vow of chastity make amends, but we cannot exclude the possibility that the quotation of the first-mentioned sin in the sequence is here intended to invoke all of them by extension.

⁴³⁹ leg. *patiantur*.

⁴⁴⁰ The angel answered: “Four years you should lie prostrate on pure earth, two on stone, and the same years the unjust(?) should suffer hunger with bread and salt and water and God will forgive him his sin.” (Cf. below, Appendix E).

Here we are given quite specific details regarding the ritual of penance involved. This information does little to illuminate the punishment itself, and can only serve to impart to the reader additional information regarding penitential practice.

Furthermore, in the last paragraph (§11) we encounter a rather curious doubling up of questions and answers. In essence, the dialogue here consists of three questions with their accompanying answers, though this time both the sequence and the identity of the speakers is different. We find that Paul is now speaking with the angel Raphael, though it is not entirely clear whether this is the same angel who has answered all the previous questions. Moreover, once Paul learns his parents are in hell, the sequence of speakers in the exchange is reversed twice, shifting emphasis first to Paul, who now answers the angel's question with a plea to God on behalf of his parents, and then to God, who gives the final answer. Moreover, this time the scene does not begin with a description of punishment or reward, but with Paul's question. Here the logical structure is:

- i. Paul asks where his parents are;
- ii. the angel answers they are in hell;
- iii. Paul weeps;
- iv. the angel asks why;
- v. Paul asks whether he can join them/pleads for mercy on their behalf;
- vi. the Lord's answer is that they will be saved.

However, the actual text doubles the greater part of this dialogue:⁴⁴¹

A Et interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Domine, ubi sunt parentes mei?

Respondit ei angelus: In infernum usurantur.⁴⁴²

B Et dixit sanctus Paulus: Domine ubi est pater meus et mater mea et fratris mei et amici mei et cumpatris mei uel parenticula mea grandis et parui?

Respondit ei angelus: In inferno usurantur.⁹⁴

Et eiectauit se sanctus Paulus super inferno et coepit amariter plorare.

A Et interrogauit Dominus angelus Raphahel: quid ploras frater Paulus?

⁴⁴¹ A similar representation of its structure has been previously printed by Ó Corráin on a hand-out for his lecture 'Can We Prove' (Maynooth, 2011).

⁴⁴² Read *urantur*.

B Venit Raphahel angelus ad sancto Paulo: Quid tam grauitur pluras frater Paulus?

A Et ille dixit: Agat plus Deus. Licet me propter parentes meos intrare in inferno.

B* Et ille dixit: Habeant ueniam. Ego spatiosus et multo misericors et pius fui super uos.

Dominus dixit ad sancto Paulo: Certo tibi dico, parentes tuos usque ad nono genuculo missus est camelos in euangelio uocatur finis multis qui parentes sancti Pauli traxerunt de inferno.⁴⁴³

The doubling of the questions, here marked with A and B, is curious. The doubling does not appear to contribute to the narrative in a meaningful way, as the questions are merely different variants of the same. The only meaningful difference—to a degree—between the two different endings to the text lies in the interpretation of the penultimate line. This has been interpreted by Carozzi as being spoken by God, whilst Ó Corráin regards it as spoken by Paul.⁴⁴⁴ The subjunctive *habeant* could possibly be read both as a statement and a plea, and it seems ambiguous whether Paul is perceived to be stating that he is merciful and devoted to God or whether we ought to read this line the other way around. Carozzi is convinced that “Le *ille* ne peut ici désigner que Dieu lui-même”.⁴⁴⁵ On the other hand, I think one may consider three reasons why it should be Paul speaking here. First, the repeated *et ille dixit* would suggest that this is again an instance of doubling, in which case Paul is the speaker, as in the previous line. Second, the Lord is only introduced into the narrative in the line following (*Dominus dixit*). Third, if we are to take it that the text is derived more or less directly from *VSP*, one might draw a comparison to the intercession scene there,⁴⁴⁶ in which Paul, assisted by the archangel Michael, is invoking the Lord’s mercy to obtain respite for the sinners. It is possible to interpret this line in the same way, presenting Paul as invoking the Lord’s generosity and mercy, and his own devotion to Him, to obtain respite for his parents. I have, in the schematic representation above, therefore interpreted the line as spoken by Paul. Yet, while the phrasing of the two pleas is different, they ask for the same thing: mercy for his parents (and extended family). And the answer is fitting to both. This last

⁴⁴³ In the interest of conserving space I have omitted the translation here. It is provided in Appendix E.

⁴⁴⁴ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 268; Ó Corráin, ‘Can We Prove’, prints it thus on his handout.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ §§ 43-4.

example of doubling, then, equally creates no functional difference in the underlying structure. This raises the question whether the scribe may have had two different versions in front of him, or was perhaps transcribing a copy with variant readings added in the margins as if it were a single narrative. This section thus once again departs from the pattern laid out in the main body of the narrative, namely that of ‘sight-question-answer’, in order to elaborate on a particular element or idea that goes beyond the immediately explanatory dialogue of the remainder of the text. The text ends with the Lord’s statement that Paul’s family is dragged out of hell.

On the whole, the structure of these two deviant and extended dialogues bears out that, in addition to illustrating the punishments of the sins of both clergy and laity, the author had a particular interest in the practice of penance and in Paul’s successful intercession. Of all the texts discussed here, this one also possibly reduces most severely the pattern of the *uisio*, here naturally derived from *VSP*, to its rhetorical structure, omitting to a large extent any narrative details. It is also clear that the question and answer structure of the text is most important here. There are no monologues in the text at all.

Table 7 Monologue and Dialogue in Red. VI

Monologue		Dialogue				
<i>No. of scenes</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Visionary and guide</i>	<i>no. of scenes (and units)</i> <i>Visionary and other character</i>	<i>Between other characters</i>	<i>Questions (involving Paul)</i>	<i>Explanations</i>
-	-	11(30)	1(3)	-	16	16

Red. XI

Much like *Red. VI*, this text opens with a brief statement of Paul’s journey to the heavens—here by quoting 2 Cor 12 as mentioned above—and continues to describe various tortures and Paul’s questions concerning those who suffer them. Since the entire narrative is written in the first person, it can, in itself, be read as a monologue (or a dialogue with the reader), but I will focus here on the words spoken in the text.⁴⁴⁷ This text initially follows a similar pattern to *Red. VI* and *VSP* in general, opening with a description of a pleasant location in heaven; namely the City of God with its twelve walls, the altar of God, and the Son of Man. The first dialogue of this

⁴⁴⁷ This feature is indicated in the table below with capital P.

text is not spoken but witnessed by Paul: he sees Jesus praising the Father saying “*Alleluia*”, to which the *hominum sanctorum turba* ‘throng of holy people’ on the walls of the city answer with the peculiar—though rather fitting given that the text is preoccupied with sin and virtue—“*Alleluia. Immundus est qui non dicit amen*”.⁴⁴⁸ Having thus introduced the heavenly city, the text proceeds to describe various locations, followed by a question from Paul concerning the nature of this place or who the people in it are, to which the angel then provides an explanation. There is very little variation to this pattern: only in paragraphs two and four do we find descriptions unaccompanied by questions. This text is thus equally governed by a triad of ‘sight-question-answer’, though it employs it (as we shall see below) in a somewhat more descriptive fashion than *Red. VI*. Most of the scenes contain a single question and explanation, except for paragraph five, which includes the relatively common topos of sinners submerged to various levels. Here, four groups of sinners are introduced and hence the paragraph contains four question-and-answer scenes.

In addition, there is a small amount of monologic discourse, which takes the form of guiding commands from the angel, e.g. (§11) *ueni, sequere me* ‘come, follow me’, or, twice, of a question, e.g. (§4) *Quare mirum est tecum?* ‘Why is this amazing to you?’. This last question is a response to Paul’s (unspoken) reaction of fear upon seeing a river of fire with beasts in it. On the whole, the monologic speeches are hortative cues primarily functioning to smooth the transition between scenes, while the dialogue forms the heart of the scene.

Table 8 Monologue and Dialogue in Red. XI

Monologue		Dialogue				
<i>No. of scenes</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Visionary and guide</i>	<i>Visionary and other character</i>	<i>Between other characters</i>	<i>Questions (involving Paul)</i>	<i>Explanations (Paul)</i>
P/5	Angel	7(20)	-	1(2)	12/2	10

FA, SVA and Lóchán

Concerning these three we can be fairly brief as the role of dialogue in them is marginal. *FA*, like most of the other texts, is written from the perspective of a narrator, but unlike them, the text contains no dialogue whatsoever. There is merely

⁴⁴⁸ “‘Alleluia’. Unclean is the one who does not say ‘Amen’”. O’Sullivan, ‘Redaction XI’.

one line in direct speech in the entire work, which is an instruction spoken by the Lord and addressed to the angels, ordering them to deliver a sinful soul to Satan. It has previously been argued that this line derives from *VSP* §16.⁴⁴⁹ In two of the manuscripts of *FA* (*B*, *F*) it is written in Latin, followed by a translation into Irish; the other three (*Y*, *LU*, *Q*) only contain the phrase in Irish.

“Hanc animam multo peccantem angelo Tartari tradite et demergat eam in infernum” .i. “Tairngid lib, a aingliu nime, in n-anmain n-écráibdig-sea 7 atnaigid i lláim Lucifir dia bádud 7 dia formúchad i fudomain iffirn tria bithu sír.”⁴⁵⁰

This feature belongs to the section of the work known as the ‘Seven Heavens’ section. It survives independently in a second Irish copy in *F*, and in a Latin as well as in an Old English homily.⁴⁵¹ The same phrase is also present in *F*’s copy and the Old English copy, though not in the Latin. We may attribute its presence in the otherwise dialogue-free *FA* to its incorporation of that work. In addition, it is remarkable, that the purely narrative, non-dialogic style of *FA* is in turn maintained in *Echtrae Cléirech Colum Chille*, where it is inserted as a whole into a voyage tale which contains a significant amount of dialogue in its own right.

There is equally only one example of direct speech in *SVA*. The work opens with the brief statement, quoted earlier, that the vision was revealed to Adomnán by an angel, whose words of warning are then quoted:

“Vae, uae, uae uiris Hiberniae insolae mandata Domini transgredientibus! Vae regibus et princi[pi]bus qui non di[l]igunt ueritatem et diligunt iniquitatem et rapinam! Vae doctoribus qui non docent ueritatem et consen[t]iunt uanitatibus imperfectorum! Vae meretricibus et peccatoribus qui sicut foenum et stipula concremabuntur a bura ignata in anno bisextili et embolesmi et in fine circuli et in Decollatione Iohannis Bautistae! IN sexta feria autem

⁴⁴⁹ Dumville, 'Towards', p. 68.

⁴⁵⁰ “*Hanc animam multo peccantem angelo Tartari tradite et demergat eam in infernum*”, that is: “Take this faithless soul away with you, angels of heaven, and surrender it into the hand of Lucifer, to be drowned and stifled in the depth of hell forever.” Carey, J., ‘*Fís Adomnáin*’. Variants of spelling will not be noted here, but one may note that *LU* and *Q* read *tabraid* for *atnaigid*. This order is rephrased more succinctly in *Y*, which reads: *Tairngich lib na hanmanna-sa, a aingli nime, i lláim Luitsifir i fudomain iffirn do grés* ‘Drag away, O heaven’s angels, these souls into the hands of Lucifer, in the depth of Hell forever!’. Stokes, ‘The Adventure’, pp. 152-3.

⁴⁵¹ See Carey, J., et al., *The End and Beyond* for an introduction and editions of the texts side by side.

plaga conueni[e]t in illo anno, nisi deuota poenitentia prohibuerit, ut
Níniuetae fecerunt!”⁴⁵²

However, upon reading the remainder of the text it becomes clear that this quotation may not represent the full extent of the information the angel has imparted to Adomnán: switching to Irish hereafter, the author informs us, among other things, that the mercy of God and Patrick may help prevent the mortality (§2) and that the plague will take the form of a gust of fire, sweeping Ireland from the southwest (§5). We are led to surmise that this information, too, is part of the vision. The words quoted by the angel therefore function as both the starting point for and the authoritative source lending support to the author’s argument, which builds on it throughout the remainder of the homily. We find no further dialogue or monologue in the text, which is purely homiletic and hortative. The code-switching from Latin to Irish is interesting and contributes to the work’s appearance of a commentary, but there is no further hint as to whether it represents the author’s source or a deliberate attempt to cast the angel’s words into Latin—we might compare, in this light, the single quotation of direct speech in Latin in *FA*. Given that the oldest copy is contained (as indeed is a copy of *FA*) in *B*, a manuscript of a decidedly macaronic character, any conclusions must await a fuller study of the usage of code-switching in this manuscript.⁴⁵³

Lóchán’s brief description of his dream-vision is included in a dialogue between himself and his brothers. The vision is related to them in narrative retrospect in the first person. It does not mention any dialogue (or monologue) between Lóchán and a supernatural character during the vision. For the purpose of this analysis the vision itself therefore bears no evidence of dialogic features.

In these three visions, then, discourse does not play an important role and is not a significant element of the texts’ structure. In the two cases where we do observe monologue, the monologue is evidently to be regarded as an authoritative

⁴⁵² “Woe! Woe! Woe to the men of the island of Ireland transgressing the Lord’s commandments! Woe to the kings and princes who do not love truth and love injustice and plunder! Woe to the teachers who do not teach truth and consent to the folly of the imperfect! Woe to the harlots and sinners who will be burned up like hay and stubble by a fire kindled in an embolismic leap year and at the end of a cycle and on the [Feast of] the Decollation of John the Baptist! On a Friday in this year a plague will come, unless devout penance will have prevented it, just as the Ninevites did!” (See Appendix A.)

⁴⁵³ Such a study is currently being undertaken by Tom de Schepper for the Bilingualism in Medieval Ireland project of the University of Utrecht.

utterance. In both cases, however, there is also the possibility of intertextual referencing.

Table 9 Monologue and Dialogue in FA, SVA and Lóchán

Text	Monologue		Dialogue (no. of scenes)				Questions	Explanations
	<i>No. of scenes</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Visionary and guide</i>	<i>Visionary and other character</i>	<i>Between other characters</i>			
FA	1	Lord	-	-	-	-	-	-
SVA	1	angel	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lóchán	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

VT

The VT contains a large amount of dialogue and monologue, interspersed throughout the work. This functions both to carry the narrative forward and, at times, to comment on it. Before the vision proper begins, Marcus introduces us to the visionary by means of a description of his character and the moment at which the vision took place, which happened to be during dinnertime. The text records Tnugdal's dramatic 'last words' before he collapses unconscious and both his own reaction and that of the bystanders when he comes to. The conversation that takes place at that moment is highly rhetorical and draws heavily on the psalms.⁴⁵⁴ It is possible, therefore, to read it simultaneously as conversation and commentary; it also introduces the crux of the story, namely the question of what happens when a soul is taken out of the body, and how this is possible.

The vision proper in VT has a similar patterning to the Redactions of VSP in that the main body of the text consists of individual chapters in which Tnugdal is introduced to a certain place or torment, which the angel then explains to him, often following questions from Tnugdal. In their first conversation, the angel rebukes

⁴⁵⁴ See *Tnugdal*, p. 113; *Pfeil*, p. 7: [bystanders] "*Nonne hic spiritus uadens et non rediens?*" "Is it not so that when the spirit passes away it does not return?" Cf. Ps 77:39. [Tnugdal] "*O deus maior est misericordia tua. quam iniquitas mea licet sit magna nimis. Quantas ostendisti mihi tribulationes multas et malas; et conversus uiuificasti me. et de abyssis terre iterum reduxisti me.*" "O God, your mercy is greater than my wickedness though it is quite great. You showed me so many cruel trials, but you restored me to life and you brought me back from the depths of the earth." Cf. Ps 70:20.

Tnugdál for following the advice of devils, but reveals that the Lord has taken mercy on him and informs him of the intent of the journey:

“Tantum esto securo et leta, quia patieris pauca de multis, que patereris, nisi tibi subuenisset misericordia nostri redemptoris. Me igitur sequere et quecumque tibi monstauero, memoriter tene, quia iterum ad corpus tuum debes redire.”⁴⁵⁵

There are plenty of examples of the question-and-answer dialogue in this work, but a few examples will suffice here. In response to questions from Tnugdál, the angel explains who suffers the punishment of the bridge (§5); why Fergus and Conall appear in the mouth of the beast Acheron (§6); why there is a soul carrying wheat across a narrow bridge; and even what sacrilege is (§7). In the section on the punishment of gluttons and fornicators, Tnugdál’s self-pity following his punishment is the trigger for a brief discourse on the balance between divine mercy and justice, and why the souls of the just are taken to see hell (§8). In the lower hell and the paradisiacal places, too, the explanations continue. In addition, there is a brief conversation between Tnugdál and St. Malachy (§9).

As mentioned above, the angel is also Tnugdál’s guide; and the dialogue is interspersed with instructions to follow him or continue on, which can be either part of or separate from the dialogues. Upon arriving at the highest point of his journey, where he sees the angels and archangels and the Lord himself, Tnugdál is instructed to listen carefully by the angel (§21), and briefly greeted by St. Rúadán (§22), though no conversation ensues. In addition, there is one example of attendants addressing King Cormac (§17) and one example of choirs of hosts of saints and people singing and greeting the soul (§18).

Lastly, a few brief monologues are allocated to the demons, who are presented as taunting Tnugdál. As soon as Tnugdál has exited his body, they stir each other up to sing the ‘hymn of death’ in front of him, whose soul, according to them, *filia est mortis* (is a child of death).⁴⁵⁶ They accuse him by means of rhetorical

⁴⁵⁵ Pfeil, p. 17; “You will be fortunate and safe because you will suffer few of the many torments you would have suffered had not the mercy of our Redeemer come to your help. So, follow me and take care to remember whatever I shall show to you, for afterwards you must return to your body.” *Tnugdál*, p. 115.

⁴⁵⁶ This is somewhat reminiscent of VF, where Fursa overhears the Devils saying that they will stir up a battle in front of him (§6). The phrase *filius mortis* is the Latin equivalent of Irish *mac báis* ‘son of death’, indicating sinners or those not leading virtuous lives. The opposite, *maic bethad* or *filií uitaí* ‘sons of life’, indicates the blessed and the virtuous. Cf. Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp. 116, n.14. Cf.

questions of causing scandal, arrogance, adultery and other vices and challenge him to repeat his previous behaviour.⁴⁵⁷ When the angel finally collects Tnugdäl, the devils lament the injustice of this act:

“O quam iniustus et crudelis est deus, quia quos uult mortificat et quos uult uiuificat, non, sicut promisit, unicuique secundum opus suum et meritum reddit: liberat animas non liberandas et dampnat non dampnandas”⁴⁵⁸

They flee without further opposition, but once Tnugdäl reaches the lower hell they are again confident he will be theirs and their taunting and threatening resumes. They boldly proclaim he will not be able to escape his torture and has no longer any hope of consolation or mercy—until, of course, the angel comes to his rescue.⁴⁵⁹ On two occasions, they are talking to each other about the tortured souls or about Tnugdäl.⁴⁶⁰

I have counted 27 scenes of dialogue in VT with a total of 124 utterances, which contain 45 questions and 45 explanations of places, torments or dogma. The additional utterances pertain to instructions or reflect other statements. There is no doubt, then, that here too the dialogue is an essential component of the textual structure and its narrative progression. The importance of the relationship between Tnugdäl and the angel, and the angel’s role of teacher as well as guide that speaks from it, is evident from the fact that approximately seventy per cent of all dialogue is taken up with questions and explanations.

Table 10 Monologue and Dialogue in VT

Monologue		Dialogue no. of scenes (and units)				
No. of scenes	Who?	Visionary and guide	Visionary and other character	Between other characters	Questions (involving Tnugdäl)	Explanations (Tnugdäl)
6(9)	devils angel attendants hosts	23(117)	1(2)	3(4)	45	45

also the *Dialogue of the Body and the Soul* (ed. Carey, J. in *The End and Beyond*), in which the devils sing a ‘devilish choral song’ (*claiscetal diabalta*) to the souls of sinners upon exiting the body (§8).

⁴⁵⁷ Pfeil, p. 9; Tnugdäl, p. 114. Cf. a similar scene in the same *Dialogue* just mentioned above.

⁴⁵⁸ Pfeil, p. 11. “O what a cruel and unjust God He is, since He brings death to whomever He wants and restores life to whomever He wants but does not reward each according to his works and merits as He promised: He frees souls who should not be freed and damns others who should not be damned.” Tnugdäl, p. 116. Cf. Matt. 16.27; Rev. 2.23. This scene, in which the devils stir each other up, accuse Tnugdäl and voice their complaints about God’s injustice, is very reminiscent of the vision of Fursa, as is the angel’s subsequent comment telling Tnugdäl not to fear.

⁴⁵⁹ Pfeil, p. 35-6; Tnugdäl, p. 136-7.

⁴⁶⁰ §§10, 12 (Tnugdäl, p. 134, 137).

TPP

In *TPP* the spoken word plays a significant role in both the vision proper and the accompanying prologue and epilogue. In the prologue, the author is particularly concerned with testimonies and witnesses. It would seem he felt the need to substantiate his account, given that he is describing an event related through a third party, Gilbert, who was not there himself at the time of the vision, though he learned about it first-hand from the visionary. The account is therefore at least two steps removed from Owein's experience. The author tells us that the narrator of the vision also gave testimony regarding another supernatural experience that took place in his own monastery.⁴⁶¹ The author himself, moreover, sought additional testimony to verify the existence of the Purgatory and provides anecdotes resulting from this inquiry. Some of these seem reliable, while others have the air of local folklore and pious fables and at least one of them, the story of the Irishman who did not know homicide was a capital sin, appears to be an invention on the part of the English.⁴⁶²

The amount of dialogue in the text, however, is minor, and most of the communication takes place through monologue. Communication and information play an important role in the text, but their significance lies rather in the interplay of words spoken and withheld. The story of the knight Owein begins, like that of Tnugdál, with an introduction describing the onset of the vision: it describes Owein's intent to atone for his sins and his decision to enter the Purgatory in order to do penance. His preparation and the advice the bishop imparts to him before he enters the pit are identical to the process of admission described a few paragraphs earlier in the Prologue. Once Owein has entered the Purgatory, two further speeches addressed to him follow. He is greeted—in a mirror image of the previous scene—by fifteen men who look like monks in an area resembling a cloister. Their leader explains to him that the devils will try to deceive him, but that, if he remains faithful and invokes the name of Jesus Christ when he is tortured, he will be saved and live to return. This piece of advice outlines the perimeters for the journey: Owein's ultimate goal is the path of salvation, which he may achieve by remaining faithful and courageous, and by carefully avoiding the pitfalls he is warned about, i.e. consenting to the devils (*si ... illis assensum prebueris*) or succumbing to their tortures, threats

⁴⁶¹ §22-3 in *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 73-4; *Easting*, p. 150-1

⁴⁶² *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 47.

or promises (*nec tormentis nec minis nec promissis eorum cesseris*).⁴⁶³ The two speeches are not intended as dialogue. They are purely instructive: no response is required. The second speech also builds on the first by repeating information given in it, and adding further information. The bishop's account of what happens in the Purgatory is thereby confirmed. The two speeches set side by side thus also serve as an authentication device and may be placed in the series of such anecdotes accompanying the story.

When the fifteen monks withdraw, the devils rush in. They too greet him with a speech, in which they mock his valour and promise him his due punishments, but also offer him the option of turning back and escaping unharmed.⁴⁶⁴ Owein, however, refuses to engage with them and remains silent. The potential for dialogue here is thus effectively cut short and turned into monologue. This pattern repeats throughout the journey through the ten punishments: the devils address him with threats of torments, telling him he may avoid them by turning back, but each time Tnugdál refuses to answer. Eight out of the ten punishment scenes contain this scenario. The devils repeatedly ask him to agree with them to turn back, each time in a similar formula: *si nostris adquiescendo consiliis reuerti uolueris* (1st meeting); *si nostris non adquieueris consiliis: hoc est ut a proposito cesses et reuertaris* (2nd torment); *nisi ut reuertaris assenseris* (3rd); *si nobis ut reuertaris non assenseris* (4th); *nisi reuerti uolueris* (6th); *nisi nobis consentiens reuerti uolueris* (8th); *si tamen nobis consenseris* (9th); *si tamen adhuc nobis assenseris ut reuertaris* (10th).⁴⁶⁵ Instead, when the devils attempt to torture him, he invokes the Lord's name and is immediately released unharmed each time. The advice Owein is given at the outset, namely that he is under no circumstance to agree with the devils or be tempted to go back, functions as a taboo as it were, which he must avoid breaking in order to be saved. Owein achieves this by, rather cleverly, refusing all conversation with them. The recurrence of the same words in the devils' phrases emphasises this taboo as

⁴⁶³ Easting, p. 128. *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 54.

⁴⁶⁴ Easting, p. 129; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 54.

⁴⁶⁵ Easting, p. 129, l. 330 ('if you agree to our advice and turn back willingly'); p. 131, ll. 382-4 ('if you do not agree to our advice: that is that you give up your purpose and turn back'); p. 132, ll. 408-9 ('unless you agree to turn back' [nb. Picard actually translates 'agree with us']); p. 132, ll. 423-4 ('if you do not agree with us to turn back'); p. 133, l. 456 ('unless you are willing to turn back'); p. 134, ll. 497-8 ('unless you consent willingly to turn back'); p. 135, l. 519 ('If however you agree with us'); p. 136, l. 555 ('If you would yet agree with us to turn back'). In the seventh torment, though the devils threaten Owein, they do not use this phrase.

well as the fact that Owein is continuously tested. His steadfastness in the face of the devils' attempts to lead him astray is ultimately what saves him. The devils' speeches, then, primarily reflect attempts to make him change his mind. Only on three occasions do they reflect their inadvertent function as guides by offering explanations. In the seventh torment, they explain to Owein that what he sees are baths.⁴⁶⁶ In the ninth torment, they attempt to trick him into turning back once more by explaining to him that he has arrived at the entrance to hell, which is their home.⁴⁶⁷ After they have disappeared into the pit into which they, unsuccessfully, tried to drag Owein, other devils appear who explain that it is in their nature to lie and that he has not, in fact, arrived in hell yet.⁴⁶⁸ In the tenth torment, these devils take him to a river and inform him that hell is under this river.

In the second half of the story, the proclivity towards monologue continues; but here it is also interspersed with dialogue. Having escaped the devils by crossing the bridge, Owein comes to a splendid wall with a door, where he is greeted by a procession of people of all religious orders. When they disperse, two archbishops welcome him and escort him through the door in order to see the beautiful, bright and verdant land behind it. They commence a lengthy speech, explaining to him 'what the places of torture [he saw] are meant to be and also this land of such great beatitude'.⁴⁶⁹ They tell him about the Fall, the Incarnation, the importance of penance, its continuation after death, and the places to which the soul may progress.⁴⁷⁰ The speech covers nearly two folios in *L* and is, with 54 lines in Easting's edition, the longest of the speeches in the text.

Having informed him of all this, the archbishops direct Owein's attention to the sky above him, ordering him to tell them what colour it is. Here Owein engages in dialogue for the first—and only—time in the text in order to answer them. They explain it is the gate of the heavenly paradise, from which celestial food comes down to them once a day. After Owein is allowed to witness this event, they explain that those who are taken into heaven enjoy it endlessly and then tell him that he must return the way he came. When he expresses his fear at this prospect and begs them to

⁴⁶⁶ Easting, p. 133, l. 471; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 62.

⁴⁶⁷ Easting, p. 135, l. 515-6; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 63.

⁴⁶⁸ *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 135, l. 531-5; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 64.

⁴⁶⁹ *que s[i]nt illa que uidisti tormentorum loca, sed et que sit ista tante patria beatitudinis*, Easting, p. 143, ll. 836-7. *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 68.

⁴⁷⁰ Easting, p. 143-4, ll. 830-884. *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 68-9.

let him stay, they tell him he cannot and explain that everything will happen according to God's plan.⁴⁷¹ On his way out, the fifteen men who also gave him his final instructions greet him joyously. They inform him that he has now been purified and congratulate him, and urge him to hurry back to the entrance.

At first glance, the text's proclivity towards monologue instead of dialogue seems striking. However, the function of the speech acts in the text is two-fold. The examples of monologue in the text are all instructive, both to Owein and to us as audience: they reveal information regarding Owein's quest—for that is what his journey most resembles—or regarding the nature of the afterworld. The devils' speeches, on the other hand, contribute little information. They are also not monologic in nature: they are intended as a dialogue, but one which is left unreciprocated. Their speeches are mostly taunting. Lastly, the brief dialogue between Owein and the two archbishops concluding the text leads to the explanation of the system of migration to heaven, but it simultaneously serves to include Owein's reluctance to return to his body.⁴⁷²

Table 11 Monologue and Dialogue in TPP

Monologue		Dialogue		no. of scenes (and units)		
<i>No. of scenes</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Visionary and guide</i>	<i>Visionary and other character(s)</i>	<i>Between other characters</i>	<i>Questions (involving)</i>	<i>Explanations (Owein)</i>
12	leader of the fifteen men; devils; archbishops	-	1(4)	-	-	3

Conclusions

The deliberate frustration of dialogue in *TPP* is a novel approach in terms of employing speech acts in the narrative, but it fits within the larger picture that emerges from this analysis, namely that the visionary is typically not seen to engage in conversation with malignant supernatural creatures. In those visions which contain dialogue, the dialogue typically occurs between the visionary and a guiding angel. The *TPP* is the only text to deviate from this pattern (nor is there a guiding angel

⁴⁷¹ Easting, p. 144, ll. 884-913. *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 70-1.

⁴⁷² I will return to this motif in 3.2.2 below. The archbishop's explanation of the afterlife is discussed in chapter 4.2.2.

present). The dialogue between the visionary and the angel is also typically protracted: it takes place at multiple times in the course of the vision. The *VF* and *VL*, with their emphasis on the dialogue between the angel and devil, stand out in deviating slightly from this pattern. The dialogue may be of two types: pragmatic or explanatory.

It is pragmatic where the angel gives directions, for instance when Fursa is told not to be afraid (§6) or to sprinkle his newly awakened body with spring water (§17); or where Laisrén is ordered to approach the angel (§2). Similarly, in *Red. XI* or *VT*, those parts of speech not immediately part of the dialogue, are no more than hortative cues, mainly consisting of directions and imperatives (*sequere me*). These naturally form part of the journey's progression and one might say such expressions stem from the angel's function as guide.

It is explanatory where the angel provides information about the things witnessed by the visionary and interprets them for him. It is in this context that the question-and-answer dialogue finds its place in the narrative. I have noted above that in many cases the angel answers questions from the visionary or, as in the case of *VF*, the angel poses questions to the visionary in order to answer them himself. I have pointed out already that in three of the texts this feature is modified, so that in *VF* and *VL* the question-and-answer dialogue takes place primarily between the angel and the devil, and it has been subverted in *TPP*. This leaves only the Redactions and *VT* as representatives of a 'typical' question-and-answer format as it is found in *VSP*. The role of the angel in providing explanations—often in the form of answers to such questions—has also been noted. To illustrate the relative importance of this feature within each of the texts I have represented both questions and explanations presented in the text in direct speech (and relating to the visionary) in the table below. It will be noted that the number of questions and explanations in the texts is generally equal or nearly so, as one would expect in a question-and-answer format. Occasionally it is higher where a question received a double or combined answer or where a question is implied. The number of questions and explanations also naturally corresponds to the amount of dialogue in the text, though the provision of explanations is not limited to passages with a dialogue structure.

I have already mentioned that the dialogue, and thereby the question and explanation topos, is one that is absent from *FA*, *Lóchán* and *SVA*. This raises

significant questions as to whether it was considered an integral or an optional part of a vision text and whether the language plays a role in the way in which the genre is modified. These questions in turn depend on whether the texts that now survive in Irish are perceived to be more or less ‘typical’. With respect to this, I will anticipate my discussion in 3.3 and tentatively suggest that the cause may perhaps partially be sought in the fact that *Lóchán* and *SVA* both vary from the ‘norm’ in that in both cases the text exemplifying the genre is embedded into another, dominant genre. In addition, or perhaps as a result, their length and situation of address have been modified. In the case of *FA* the reason for the omission is not as obvious, but this text, as we have seen, places greater emphasis on geographical descriptions, and is known for other omissions as well, such as the names of the angels and heavens in the section on the souls ascent through the seven heavens.⁴⁷³

The forms of speech attributed to devils in the text appear variable in general, but such speech is in practise restricted to a certain purpose in each text. Most often, the devils are presented as antagonising and questioning authority, as befits their function as opponents to the angels and to the soul’s desire to go to heaven. A repeated theme, likely derived from *VF*, whence it appears in *VL* and *VT*, is that of the devils claiming they have been done an injustice and that the Lord is unfair. This motif is closely associated with a reference to Matt. 18:3-4, by which the visionary is accused of falling short of the desired qualities:

Et dixit amen dico uobis nisi conuersi fueritis et efficiamini sicut paruuli non intrabitis in regnum caelorum. Quicumque ergo humiliauerit se sicut paruulus iste hic est maior in regno caelorum.⁴⁷⁴

Whereas the devils may threaten the visionary, this rarely leads to a conversation, and any conversation that ensues typically takes place between the devils and the angel. In all three cases, this conversation leads to a resolution before the text progresses, and does not resume afterwards.⁴⁷⁵ Again, *TPP* is the notable exception,

⁴⁷³ In addition, the single sentence of direct speech recorded in *FA*, which consists of an order from the Lord to the angels, is untypical of the pattern, in that the addressee is not the visionary.

⁴⁷⁴ ‘And said: “Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.”’

⁴⁷⁵ This notwithstanding the fact that in *VF* the conversation itself is interrupted by Fursa’s experience of the four fires.

as in this case the devils are not only attempting a protracted conversation with the visionary, but also engage in explanations.

In addition, a number of visionaries engage in conversation with other characters: Fursa speaks with Beoán; in *Red. VI* Paul converses with the Lord; Tnugdal has a brief exchange with St. Malachy and Owein with the two archbishops. These are all characters of a notably elevated standing, superior to that of the visionary. These dialogues with secondary characters are mostly brief and take up a marginal amount of space in comparison to the main dialogues. In fact, in most cases their engagement with the visionary and thus their role in the discourse remains relatively limited. Typically it occurs at only one point in the narrative—in contrast to that with the angel guide—and is thus restricted to a small number of scenes in the table below. When they do speak, the majority of the discourse spoken by such secondary speakers is monologic. Occasionally there is a pragmatic function to these speeches—for instance, in *TPP*, the monks welcoming Owein into the Purgatory inform him of what comes next—but these monologic discourses more often have a purely explanatory or didactic character. Malachy, for instance, is employed in *VT* to explain the empty seat in heaven to Tnugdal (§24); and the archbishops receiving Owein into heaven in *TPP* provide him with a lengthy explanation of the land he has visited and of Christian dogma (§§16-9). In two of the three texts in which the visionary engages with secondary characters, namely in *VF* and *TPP*, these didactic discourses are accorded a significant amount of space. The speeches attributed to Beoán and Meldán in *VF* are by far the most elaborate, reflecting their importance in the narrative as a whole. They are almost entirely taken up with a monologue on the vices and virtues.⁴⁷⁶ What sets this particular text apart from the others, in this respect, is that it not merely explanatory but also more distinctly paraenetic.

⁴⁷⁶ Note that the first part of this speech is attributed, rather vaguely, to Beoán and Meldán simultaneously, so that it remains uncertain whom we are listening to here and the term ‘monologue’ is perhaps a little less accurate here in that it implies a single speaker. The point is, however, that the speech is one-directional and does not anticipate a response.

Table 12 Overview of Monologue and Dialogue in the Visions

Text	Monologue		Dialogue no. of scenes (and units)			Q&E	
	No. of scenes	Who?	Visionary and guide	Visionary and other character	Between other characters	Questions	Explanations
VF	4	Angel Beoán Meldán	3(10)	1(1)	2(38)	6/3 [^]	10
VL	3	Angel	2(6)	-	2(5)	3	4
Red. VI	-	-	11(30)	1(3)	-	16	16
Red. XI	[†] P/5	Angel	7(20)	-	1(2)	12/2	10
FA	1	Lord	-	-	-	-	-
SVA	1	angel	-	-	-	-	-
Lóchán	P	-	-	-	-	-	-
VT	6(9)	devils, angel, attendants, hosts	23(117)	1(2)	3(4)	45	45
TPP	12	leader of the fifteen men; devils; archbishops	-	1(4)	-	-	3

[†]P: related in the first person.[^]not asked by the visionary.

3.1.4 Exhortation: Paraenesis and Hortatory Instructions

In a number of the key texts, we may observe that the conversation involves moral instruction. The speeches attributed to Beoán and Meldán in *VF*, in particular, voice a concern with correct living and the correction of perceived missteps, giving expression to a belief in the causal relationship between one's actions in this life and one's place in the next. These remarks include not only an enumeration of the faults of certain personages, but also clear instructions on how one ought to live and act and which rules ought to be observed. The saints' speeches are at once moralising, exhortative and non-negotiable, functioning as injunctions to act in a certain manner; that is, they are paraenetic in function.

The term *paraenesis* (from Greek παραίνεσις), normally described in English as 'moral exhortation', is possibly more familiar to scholars of the New Testament, and of Pauline material in particular, than it is to medievalists, but there is no doubt

that this particular mode of exhortation underpins much of early medieval Christian literature too.⁴⁷⁷ Originally stemming from Greek philosophy, paraenesis was recognised as a mode of exhortation, but is now particularly associated with the latter sections of the New Testament letters; it has been argued that it even became something like a genre in the Christian tradition.⁴⁷⁸ Until the 1920s, the term was primarily understood in scholarship in its ancient Greek sense as a general term for advice, but with the rise of form criticism it came to be used to describe a literary form.⁴⁷⁹ As a result, its denotation has been stretched to include anything from a very broad understanding of paraenesis as hortatory text or speech to a much more limited interpretation of it narrowed down to specific and concise forms and motifs.⁴⁸⁰ In modern scholarship, Wiard Popkes has identified three different approaches to the subject, namely to interpret paraenesis (i.) as a genre, i.e. having a literary form; (b.) as a term, i.e. from a semantic point of view; (c.) from a situational point of view, i.e. its sociological setting.⁴⁸¹ In order to clarify the word's meaning and scholarly interpretation, two conferences were held in Lund (2000) and Oslo (2001) at which two different definitions were proposed, with the most significant difference being that the 2001 definition is more exclusive.⁴⁸²

In the volume resulting from these conferences, Popkes revisits the arguments and tests them against the evidence from the New Testament. He argues against identifying paraenesis as a genre and suggests that instead one must ask whether a text has a paraenetic purpose. In his view, the semantics provide the

⁴⁷⁷ Rubensen, S., 'Wisdom, Paraenesis and the Roots of Monasticism', in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 125 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004) pp. 521-35.

⁴⁷⁸ Introduction, p. 5, in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*; and other contributions in the same.

⁴⁷⁹ Starr, J., 'Was Paraenesis for Beginners?', in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, pp. 73-111, p. 79.

⁴⁸⁰ In fact, James Starr writes that as a result the term has become "notoriously multivalent" (*Ibid.*, p. 77-8).

⁴⁸¹ Popkes, W., 'Paraenesis in the New Testament: An Exercise in Conceptuality', in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, pp. 13-46, p. 14.

⁴⁸² The definition resulting from the Lund conference, in the words of Reidar Aasgaard (2000), was: "Paraenesis is [1] a text in which [2] a person of authority addresses [3] another person (or group, or subgroup) [4] by means of various literary devices [5] with the specific intention of influencing behaviour in the practical ('ethical') issues of everyday life [6] and the overarching intention of preserving and enhancing a shared, basic ideological conviction, [7] often by utilizing traditional material." *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4. Cf. Starr, J., 'Was Paraenesis for Beginners?', in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, pp. 73-111, pp. 78-81.

clearest point of departure in terms of definition and, combined with the situational aspect, provide a functional understanding of paraenesis.⁴⁸³ Popkes argues that semantically the term παραίνεσις “has clear connotations: positive, benevolent, urgent advice which must not be disregarded”, and is intended to suggest a positive action.⁴⁸⁴ He further observes that settings such as farewell discourses and pastoral epistles give rise to superior-subordinate or experienced-inexperienced type relationships; he recognises an element of transition on the part of the receiver, but considers the authority to lie not with the speaker, but in the message itself.⁴⁸⁵ In the context of the New Testament, he argues, paraenesis takes place in a community setting, where it has a pedagogical function, focusing on rules, exemplary behaviour and virtues and vices, but is used in situations of continued education rather than instruction for the newly converted. James Starr, in the same volume, explores this issue further, seeking in particular to answer the question whether early Christian paraenesis was intended for neophytes. He surveys a selection of Christian and pagan writers, such as Paul and Plutarch, and concludes that paraenesis was “intended to *foster the working out over the course of a lifetime* of the moral ideal inherent in a given theology” and was used “at all stages of moral or spiritual development”.⁴⁸⁶ With respect to its relevance to the instruction of neophytes he concludes that “Moral conduct was subordinate to the more pressing need to instruct the convert in the theology and cosmology of the newfound faith or school of philosophy”.⁴⁸⁷ In particular, his analysis of Paul’s writings illustrates that while paraenesis did figure in the apostle’s teaching of neophytes, it was part of his teaching of theology and incomprehensible without it.⁴⁸⁸

In sum, while acknowledging the fact that scholars are not in perfect agreement on the scope of the term, there appears to be general agreement that paraenesis represents an authoritative exhortation with the benevolent aim of reminding (as opposed to instructing) the listener of certain moral practices which

⁴⁸³ Popkes, 'Paraenesis', pp. 16-7, 32.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16-7. He adds that the English ‘moral exhortation’ “puts too much emphasis on the ethical dimension; nevertheless it does reflect the positive character of the advice”.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-7, 34.

⁴⁸⁶ Starr, 'Was Paraenesis', p. 111.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

are part of their shared worldview. I have taken the following, suggested at the Oslo conference, as a working definition:

Paraenesis is [1] a concise, benevolent injunction [2] that reminds of moral practices to be pursued or avoided, [3] expresses or implies a shared world view. [4] Consequently paraenesis does not anticipate disagreement.⁴⁸⁹

Returning now to the visions, it seems to me that it is possible to identify examples of paraenesis as separate from more general hortatory instructions of a different kind in four of our key texts. The monologue by Beoán (§15) in *VF* is perhaps the clearest (and most extensive) example of this type of exhortation. Having just given Fursa an extended lecture on the vices of the clergy, Beoán proceeds to instruct him on how to live his life: “*Vitam tuam creaturis dei utendo serua; omne quod malum est abnegando respue.*”⁴⁹⁰ He further counsels him not to keep more possessions than he needs and to be forthcoming with alms and good works for the poor; gives him advice regarding the balance between public and private (monastic) life, and cautions him against the temptations of the world and the devil. There is no question that most or (probably) all of this advice cannot be new to Fursa and must be intended as a reminder (or admonition). The advice repeats principles that he most likely would have been taught during his religious education and it is evident that Beoán is drawing on their shared worldview. He approaches Fursa as a ‘faithful steward’ (*fidelis dispensator*), recognising their similar professions, and builds upon his knowledge by addressing the practicalities of living out their faith in everyday life rather than instructing him with new principles. The first point of advice, regarding the possession of property, is especially fitting as a reminder of correct practice in an area in which Fursa recently erred; and Beoán’s advice regarding public affairs and worldly cares naturally follows on from this. His advice carefully outlines what to do and what to avoid. A secondary feature linked to paraenesis is present here too: Beoán would appear to be Fursa’s superior both by

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34. In light of his analysis of the New Testament, Popkes (*loc. cit.*, pp. 41-2) makes the argument that ‘concise’ is a term difficult to qualify and that it ought not to be understood too narrowly. He therefore favours the phrase “clear, concrete, benevolent guidance”. In addition, I would like to note that this definition does not rule out the presence or absence of other features often mentioned in connection with paraenesis, such as point [2] in the Lund definition, that the speaker is a person of authority, or [4] that various literary devices may appear.

⁴⁹⁰ §15. (Ciccarese, ‘Le visioni’, p. 298). ‘Save your life by using the creation of God; reject all that is evil by denying it.’

rank, as he is described as a venerable *praesul* (§11), as well as by age; as such, he carries authority.

Beoán's address is rather straightforward as it is addressed to Fursa personally, but the preceding two paragraphs, in which Beoán and Meldán address the vices of the clergy, are addressed not simply to Fursa, but rather, *through* him, to a wider audience of princes and doctors of the Church. One might classify such paraenesis as indirect, but nonetheless it is clear that the speaker addresses both the visionary and the wider audience simultaneously. Whilst this group is not present at the address, their role as audience is anticipated, a feature repeated in the saints' closing instructions to Fursa in §15. In these two paragraphs they address the *neglegentiam doctorum* (negligence of teachers) and the *mala exempla prauorum principum* (bad examples of crooked princes⁴⁹¹). Again, the doctors of the Church are reminded of things they ought to know and corrected on their practices, which are perceived to be out of line with established morals.⁴⁹² The doctors ought to recognise the physical and spiritual vices (§13) and prescribe suitable remedies (§14) for them.⁴⁹³ Together with the princes they ought to 'call forth the souls of the faithful to the lamentations of penance after (moral) offenses', but they are reprimanded for doing exactly what they want instead.⁴⁹⁴ Lastly, they are reminded of the need for humility and warned against the sin of pride. This exhortation too, then, is paraenetic in nature.⁴⁹⁵

Additionally, following the incident with the burning sinner in §16, the angel reminds Fursa once more that repentance will be accepted until the last hour of life and that gifts from the wicked must be distributed amongst the poor. This final repetition is in fact a double reminder, repeating yet again what Beoán had

⁴⁹¹ While *princeps* can also designate the head of a church or religious community, it seems to me that in §13-5 the leaders of the land are contrasted with the religious leaders. Cf. *doctores ecclesiae et principes* §13, 14; *rex et sacerdos* §14.

⁴⁹² §13 *Doctores namque Prophetarum libros considerantes intellegant et quale sit hoc tempus cognoscant*. 'For doctors [of the Church], who reflect on the books of the Prophets, ought to understand and know what this time is like.'

⁴⁹³ §14 *Omnis ergo doctor singulis uitis congrua debet obponere medicamenta*.

⁴⁹⁴ §14 *...animas fidelium ad penitentiae lamentum post culpas prouocent*. Ms H reads *medicamentum* for *lamentum*; C and its derivatives read *sacerdotes* for *doctores*.

⁴⁹⁵ The type of paraenesis apparent in this section, being addressed to rulers, reminds one of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, also a paraenetic text, which equally aims to move rulers towards becoming morally just. Cf. Starr, 'Was Paraenesis', p. 89.

previously reminded him of. Following this series of exhortations, Fursa is described as *his atque aliis sanctae exhortationis sermonibus instructus* (§17).⁴⁹⁶

These exhortatory speeches, which contribute—substantially if indirectly—to the moral ethos of the narrative as a whole, are distinct from the more pragmatic commands in the text. Among these can be classified, for instance, Beoan’s exhortations to Fursa at the end of §15, in which he is told to announce the word of God to the princes of Ireland and the exalted priests of the holy Church; or from the angel’s commands to take back his own body and, once awake, to sprinkle spring-water upon it (§17).

A similar but much briefer example of paraenesis addressed, through the visionary, to a larger group of listeners, is found in *VL* §§10-11.

(§10) “Apair friu *immurgu* denat aithrige. Ar nach aon do-gena aithrige 7 for-cennfa inti, ni bia asinn luc-sa acht biaid i lluc didanta ond ulc-sa 7 na mbera a aithrige secha. Acus dano anti bias i firinde, as betha for-accai cein bis i curp 7 as betha na mbia mad feidil i firinne.”⁴⁹⁷

(§11) “Apair friu *iarum*,” ol an t-aingel, “anti fuil i firinne ba feidil innti, ar niba sir a n-innraidni doib cona ti éc. Inti dano fil i n-etail De, dénad aithrige, ol ar-foem Deia ind aithrige mad o cride etail do-gnether 7 cungenaid trocaire De fris.”⁴⁹⁸

However, in these paragraphs the address is, in fact, twofold: the main body of the address is directed (through Laisrén) at a wider audience, while he himself is addressed separately with the simple (non-paraenetic) injunction *apair friu*. In *VL* the identity of the intended audience remains ambiguous, but I think we may safely assume that at least part (if not all) of the people of Ireland are familiar with the Christian worldview. These paragraphs may further demonstrate another feature linked to paraenesis (also found in *VF*), namely that it is quite common for a paraenetic injunction to act to be followed by a theologising explanation. The latter typically begins with an adverb or conjunction ‘for, since’: i.e. *Ar* and *dano* above, or

⁴⁹⁶ ‘instructed by these and other holy discussions of exhortation’.

⁴⁹⁷ “Say to them, however, that they should repent. For everyone who shall repent, and who shall end his life thus, will not be in this place but in a place of consolation from this evil; and his repentance will carry him beyond it. And the one who is in righteousness sees life [ahead] as long as he is in the body; and he will have life if he is constant in righteousness.”

⁴⁹⁸ “Say to them moreover,” said the angel, “that the one who is in righteousness should be constant therein, for not long will be their [time of] taking account before death comes to them. As for the one who is under God’s displeasure: let him repent, for God accepts that repentance if it be done with a pure heart, and God’s mercy will help him.”

Nam or *enim* in *VF*. This structure is particularly linked to the Pauline epistles, but, to my knowledge, its usage in later medieval literature awaits further investigation.⁴⁹⁹ With respect to the rhetoric of the visions, it can be said that the combination of injunction and theologising explanation lends force to the argument conveyed in the injunctions while simultaneously drawing on the listeners' shared worldview.

Shorter paraenetic statements are also found in *VT*, in the form of the angel's repeated exhortations not to repeat his former trespasses:

"De cetero, autem caueto, ne, cum ad corpus reuertaris, amplius ista aut maiora merearis."⁵⁰⁰

"...oportet te precauere, ne, cum fueris tue potestatis, iterum ista merearis."⁵⁰¹

"Reuertere ergo ad corpus tuum unde exieras et stude abstinere ab his que ante faciebas."⁵⁰²

While the protagonist here is not a religious man from the outset, he is expected to be familiar with Christian teachings and is reprimanded for ignoring them elsewhere in the text.⁵⁰³ Here, however, the angel reminds Tnugdäl not only of knowledge he possessed before his vision commenced, but also of knowledge gained during his journey. His teaching, through the medium of a journey, is coming to an end and the paraenesis here serves to fix what has been learned firmly in Tnugdäl's mind, encouraging him to act upon it, and amend his behaviour accordingly in the future. Again, these particular injunctions specifically concern his moral behaviour and can

⁴⁹⁹ Engberg-Pedersen, T., 'The Concept of Paraenesis', in Starr, J. and T. Engberg-Pedersen (eds.), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, pp. 47-72, pp. 63, 7; Starr, 'Was Paraenesis', pp. 80, 95. This feature is conventionally referred to as the 'οὐν paraeneticum'. A wider investigation into its usage in later medieval literature as a whole, and the possible role of the Pauline epistles in its dissemination, is a *desideratum*. In particular, such an investigation would have to address the question whether this feature survives as a meaningful and recognisable pattern over and beyond the regular usage of *nam* and *enim* (or *ar* and *dano*).

⁵⁰⁰ Pfeil, p. 13. "In the future beware all the more not to deserve this and worse when you have returned to your body", *Tnugdäl*, p. 117.

⁵⁰¹ Pfeil, *Pfeil*, p. 19. "...you must beware never again to deserve these torments when you recover your faculties." Picard and de Pontfarcy, *Tnugdäl*, p. 122.

⁵⁰² "So, go back to the body you came from and apply yourself to abstinence from your former activities." *Tnugdäl*, p. 156.

⁵⁰³ See §2 and the conclusion, pp. 115 and 156 in *Tnugdäl*.

be set apart from other exhortations such as injunctions to follow and pay attention or to pass the message on to the living.⁵⁰⁴

In *TPP* likewise we do not come across any form of moral exhortation until the end of the vision, when Owein has finished his journey. The journey itself functions as a learning process and the paraenetic injunctions appear most fitting at the end of this process—as they do quite literally here, at the end of the archbishops' allocution. In their speech (§§16-9), they explain what he has just seen and where he has arrived. They then use the fall of Adam as an example of the result of disobedience to God's words and Christ as the example of divine mercy, before explaining the necessity of penance as a result of the weakness of men and the organisation of the afterworld. This speech may be interpreted as a theologising explanation preceding the paraenesis. It is rounded off with a demonstration of God's power in the form of a taste of the celestial food, after which Owein is told he must now return to whence he came without fear and the archbishops inform him that

“si amodo sobrie ac sancte uixeris, non solum de ista requie, sed et de celorum mansione seures esse poteris. Si uero, quod absit, iterum illecebris carnis uitam tuam pollueris, en ipse uidisti quid tibi maneat in penis.”⁵⁰⁵

Here too, then, the injunction serves to reinforce the message: one's actions in life have their counterpart in heavenly rewards.

In both these texts, the protagonists are identified as sinners at the start of the text, but neither is unfamiliar with the Christian faith. The moral lesson learned through their experience thus builds, to an extent, on earlier knowledge. In the case of Owein this is most evident, as he presents himself for confession to the bishop. Consequently, while there is certainly a significant element of reform to his experience, which is borne out in the changes he makes to his life afterward, he cannot be said to be a neophyte and the vision does not represent a conversion so

⁵⁰⁴ Pfeil, pp. 11 and 44: “*Me igitur sequere et quecunque tibi monstraui, memoriter tene, quia iterum ad corpus tuum debes redire.*”, “So, follow me and take care to remember whatever I shall show to you, for afterwards you must return to your body”, p. 115; and “*sed tu narrabis uiuentibus omnia hec*”, “As for you, you will tell all these things to the living”, p. 143.

⁵⁰⁵ Easting, p. 145. “if from now on you lead a sober and holy life, you can be sure not only of this rest, but also of the celestial mansion. But, if, God forbid, you stain your life again with the seductions of the flesh, you have now seen for yourself what kind of tortures are in store for you.”, *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 70.

much as continued education. Tnugdál, on the other hand, is aware of the Christian faith—as we are told he is reminded about the salvation of his soul—but chooses to ignore it altogether. He may not, therefore, have been a neophyte, but does not appear to be a practising Christian either. His experience thus comes closer to a conversion process than that of Owein. It is interesting in this light, that in the case of Tnugdál, who is at the lowest level of education of the visionaries considered here, the theologising explanations are absent and the emphasis appears to be more on exempla.

In sum, paraenesis is different from the hortative instructions dealt out to the visionary at the end of the journey—these are not usually moral but rather practical exhortations asking the visionary, for instance, to preach the message to others. In our other key texts no such direct paraenesis can be found, but it must nonetheless be acknowledged that the general function of these texts is implicitly hortatory, or even paraenetic, in intent. In each case, the vision is intended to motivate the visionary to act in some fashion, and in most cases, to motivate a secondary audience in the form of *his* listeners to act as well—as we are permitted to witness in *Lóchán*. Of course, the written text itself, in the third place, is intended to affect its reader in a similar fashion. The *SVA*, for instance, though different in form from the other texts in many ways, clearly calls for a change in moral behaviour and even provides a manual for achieving this. The caveat here is, of course, that the reward for moral improvement, in this text, is not the promise of the heavenly kingdom, but rather the prevention of the foretold catastrophe from striking Ireland. Though paraenesis can be said to contribute to or give explicit expression to such motivations, it must nonetheless be separated from such general concerns as an independent feature.

I have already pointed out that these examples of paraenesis are not the only exhortations in these texts. Another notable feature of exhortation is what may for convenience be termed the ‘closing instruction’. This is the final advice or set of instructions given to the visionary in preparation for his return to his body. In most cases this comes at the end of the vision, but it may also appear earlier on in the text, often anticipating a final instruction at the end. This is the case for instance in *VF*, in which Fursa is given instructions to preach first by Beoán (§15) and subsequently by the angel (§16 *praedica ergo omnibus*). In *VL*, which is unfortunately incomplete, Laisrén is also told to preach early on in his journey (§10). In *FA* such an instruction

is only mentioned at the end. The text describes that Adomnán's soul was addressed by the angel, who

no forcongrad fuirre co ndigse doidise cosin corp cétna asar escomla
 7 coro innised i ndálaib 7 i n-airechtaib, i coimthinólaib laech 7
 cléirech, fochraice nime 7 piana ifirn feib ros foillsig aingel in
 coemtechta di.⁵⁰⁶

Where Fursa and Laisrén are given particular messages to pass on, Adomnán is told specifically to relate the revelations from his vision to everyone—both laymen and cleric. Similarly, in §16 of *VT*, Tnugdál is told *sed tu narrabis uiuentibus omnia hec*⁵⁰⁷ and again, in §24 he is told *omnia que uidisti ad utilitatem proximorum memoriter retinere*.⁵⁰⁸ These statements, however, were already anticipated in §2, where the angel instructs him to remember all he is about to see. In *Red. VI* and *XI*, *TPP* (as well as *SVA* of course) this kind of closing instruction is absent.

Such instructions are in part a necessary *topos* to give the text its authority: there can be no text if the visionary never revealed his vision. This is indeed precisely why *VSP* is considered apocryphal and *Revelation* is not: the consensus, voiced repeatedly in the Middle Ages already by such scholars as Sozomen and Aldhelm of Malmesbury,⁵⁰⁹ is that Paul never revealed the contents of the vision he refers to in 2 Cor. This *topos* is of course also tied in closely with the author's intended message—for which the instructions themselves may function as a *pseudo*-authorial voice—and audience. I will consequently return to this feature in the next two sections.

Conclusion to 3.1

To conclude, this analysis demonstrates that the manner of revelation is not merely an element integral to the subject of the text, inherent in the nature of a revelation, but also that it determines the structural and argumentative composition of vision texts. This is clearly visible in Redactions where the triad of 'sight, question, answer' accounts for the greater part (ca. 90%) of the text—nearly the only thing directly

⁵⁰⁶ '[he] was commanding it to come back to the same body out of which it had passed, and to relate in meetings and in assemblies, in gatherings of laymen and clerics, the rewards of heaven and the punishments of hell as the guardian angel had revealed them to it.' (§54). Note that *Y* omits *feib - di*.

⁵⁰⁷ *Pfeil*, p. 44; 'As for you, you will tell all these things to the living', *Tnugdál*, p. 143.

⁵⁰⁸ *Pfeil*, p. 56 (here placed under the next heading); 'You must retain in your memory everything you saw, for the benefit of your neighbour', *Tnugdál*, p. 155.

⁵⁰⁹ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 3-6.

taken from *VSP*. This is worth noting in itself as it is the journey aspect of vision texts, and of the *Visio Pauli* in particular, which tends to receive most attention, and which perhaps stands out most for both later medieval and modern readers. The absence of a significant journey element in the earliest of the Redactions especially has consequences for the way in which we may interpret them in the light of Irish vision literature, or even in relation to the development of the genre as a whole. Moreover, they demonstrate the importance of speech as one of the driving elements in the storyline. However, while—as we shall see—certain motifs in the Redactions can be related to the other visions here discussed, structurally they cannot form precedents for such a text as *FA*, where the role of voice is minimal. *FA* is unique in this respect. The fact that both of the earliest Redactions emphasize the question-and-answer dialogue over the journey aspect, with *Red. VI* being sparsest perhaps in descriptive detail, indicates a preoccupation with didactics which is particularly striking because of the emphatically penitential tone of the texts. Despite this emphasis, both texts present us with a distilled version of the structure of revelation transmitted through *VSP*, namely the triad of ‘sight-question-answer’. The same structure also underpins *VF*, *VL* and *VT*; even in *TPP*, where questions are absent, explanations are nonetheless present.

In *FA*—where dialogue is absent—we may nevertheless observe, in that part of the tour that describes the punishments (§§41-48), a pattern reminiscent of the triad above. Each of the paragraphs 43-48 begins with a description of the scene of the punishment and, as if the question had been removed, is followed by a description of those who suffer the punishment in question. The changeover is typically indicated by a personal pronoun shifting the emphasis from the punishment to the sinner. This further corroborates the suggestion that this part of the text may indeed have been based on a version of *VSP* or at least on a text with a similar pattern. *SVA* or *Lóchán* show no indication that the author had a similar concept in mind.

Analysis of the dialogues and moral exhortation in the text furthermore shows clearly that each character—and not only the visionary and the guide—fulfils a particular role within the larger narrative. In particular, moral exhortation is in a number of cases specifically attributed to secondary characters rather than to the angel guide. The following section will therefore briefly discuss the function of the

most significant characters in the narratives, before rounding off with a discussion of the authorial voice and the relationship between form and function.

3.2 Characters

From the previous discussion, the pre-eminence of the function of discourse in the text and the role of the protagonists in such discourse, are evident. Here I will take a closer look at the portrayal, relations and function of the characters within the narrative. The visionary, as the main protagonist, is the most complex character and different aspects of this figure are discussed over four sections. First to be considered is the visionary's identity: this is often sketched in the 'scene setting' prior to the vision itself, but can in broad terms also include the effects of the visionary experience, e.g. any resultant changes in his lifestyle. Second is the visionary's reaction to the experience, which tends to serve as a comment on the connection between the here and the hereafter. On a narrative level, as we shall see, both these features play a significant role in asserting authoritative and didactic strategies in the text. Third is the visionary's situation just prior to the vision. This is an aspect of the scene-setting that is closely related to the manner of revelation, and which betrays signs of having developed into a *topos*. Fourth, and most important for both the theological (and practical) premise of the otherworldly journey of the vision, is the separation of body and soul. Aside from the visionary, the two most important characters in the narrative are the mediator and the 'familiar', each of whom has a particular relation to the visionary. Lastly, this section concludes with a brief discussion of the other inhabitants of the afterworld—mainly devils—and their function.

3.2.1 The Visionary I: Identity

In the introduction, I touched briefly on the gender of the visionary, indicating that in most cases the visionary is male. In the key texts here discussed, this generalisation holds true: in each case the visionary is male.⁵¹⁰ Regarding the visionary's social status, the most important feature to note is that three out of our seven visionaries are

⁵¹⁰ Though this is indeed the norm in pre-twelfth-century vision literature on the whole, there are also examples of female visionaries. See, for instance, the visions of Flothilda, edited and translated in Dinzelbacher, *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur*, pp. 58-64; and the visions of Radegund and Aldegund discussed in chapter 6 and 7 in Moreira, I., *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2000).

lay persons; these are Lóchán, Tnugdál and Owein. If we consider the voyagers in *Echtra Clérech Coluim Cille*, in which a copy of *FA* is contained as a separate case, this number goes up. Perhaps the most important observation to mention here, is that these represent the latest texts in the corpus. The visionary's identity, articulated through such features as the visionary's status and the lasting effect of the experience, plays a significant role in the rhetorical scheme of the text. This analysis demonstrates the presence of two separate identity strategies, which influence the didactic approach of the text and determine how authority is established.

The first of these strategies involves establishing the visionary as an authoritative messenger. This is most evident in *Red. VI* and *XI*, *FA* and *SVA*, and *VL*. These texts provide relatively little in the way of an introduction to their visionary. Neither *Red. VI* nor *Red. XI* provide a scene setting in any real sense: *Red. VI* simply tells us that *Sanctus Paulus ductus est in regnum Dei*⁵¹¹ and *Red. XI* quotes 2 Cor 12 in its opening line. Both of course purport to describe the experience of the apostle Paul of Tarsus in imitation of *VSP* and are therefore pseudepigraphic in nature. The derivative nature of the text and the fact that the visionary is an apostle go some way to explain the absence of the scene setting: his authority is hardly in doubt. The same also applies to *FA* and *SVA*. In an Irish context, Adomnán, as a highly respected saint, scholar and statesman, hardly requires an introduction. However, both works are dated so much later than his lifetime (†704 AD) that the attribution can safely be dismissed.⁵¹² He followed in the footsteps of Columba, his relative and predecessor as abbot of Iona, and it appears that the visionary and prophetic qualities normally attributed to St. Columba may have been transferred to Adomnán in later works.⁵¹³ Adomnán in fact barely features at all in either *FA* or *SVA*, and the texts have little to say about him. At the end of the prologue of *FA*, he is introduced as *ardecnaid iarthair domain* 'the high scholar of the west of the world', hence as an authoritative figure, whilst he is more specifically characterised as a preacher at the end (§55) and asked to communicate his vision to others. In *SVA* he is

⁵¹¹ See below, Appendix E.

⁵¹² Though there is no reliable recorded evidence that Adomnán experienced visions of this sort, Boswell speculates that he might perhaps have preached a similar message to that presented in *FA* in his lifetime (*An Irish Precursor*, pp. 26-7).

⁵¹³ Nagy, J.F., 'The Middle-Aged Life of Adomnán', in Sautman, F. C., et al. (eds.), *Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition*, MLA-IB (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), pp. 209-28; Carey, J., 'Varieties of Supernatural Contact in the Life of Adomnán', in Carey, J., et al. (eds.), *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 49-62.

simply presented as a *uir Spiritu sancto plenus* (§1). There too, his sole function is to communicate the warning revealed to him. Adomnán, therefore, is not assigned any other function than that of an authoritative messenger.⁵¹⁴ By contrast, Paul is, as in *VSP*, an active protagonist in both Redactions. In neither of the Redactions is Paul given an injunction to preach, though he appears to be asking questions rather for the benefit of others in §6 of *Red. VI*. In addition, both texts are severely abridged in comparison with their original, which does contain this feature.

Another text arguably belonging in this category is *VL*. Though we are told little to nothing about Laisrén—his rank or status is not identified in the text—we may surmise that he was a cleric from the task he came to perform, namely to cleanse a church, though, in the absence of much evidence regarding this practice, even this must remain speculation.⁵¹⁵ It is evident, however, that Laisrén is not taken up to suffer punishments, but merely to witness them: the angel tells the devil that Laisrén will not go with them as he has not come to stay; “*Ar beraid robad reunn coa cheli*”.⁵¹⁶ In §§9-11 his concern is solely for the souls of the people of Ireland he sees lamenting in the doorway of hell. In his own way, therefore, Laisrén is presented as an authoritative figure and messenger to his people.

These texts, and *FA* in particular, highlight the function of the visionary as an authoritative messenger, thereby also lending authority to the vision. This is not unusual: in the Middle Ages the authority of a text was often largely determined by who was believed to have written it, and we consequently find many medieval authors adapting names of earlier well-respected writers. In these four texts, each visionary is a person of a certain authority, such as a scholar (Adomnán), ecclesiastic (Laisrén) or a disciple of Christ (Paul). This makes them not only reliable characters to whom to attribute a vision, but also eminently suitable as messengers to others upon their return, when they effectively take over the angel’s role as mediator. This function is anticipated in *VL* and *FA* by the presence of instructions in the text exhorting the visionary to preach or to remember as discussed above. In the *Redactions* the

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Dumville, 'Towards', p. 62.

⁵¹⁵ The closest parallel is the account of the foundation of Lastingham in *HE* III.23, in which Cedd retreats to his chosen location to cleanse it through prayer and fasting (Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 286-8). Given that he was trained in the tradition of Lindisfarne, which in turn was founded in the tradition of Iona under Aidán, it is not unlikely that this usage ultimately derived from that community. Cf. Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén' and Volmering, N.J.B., *From Egypt to England: Aspects of Asceticism in the Early Anglo-Saxon Period*, MA diss., Radboud University (2007), p. 36.

⁵¹⁶ “For he will carry a warning from us to his fellows”, §7.

visionary's function as messenger might be implicit, given that Paul is widely known as a teacher; but it is otherwise absent from the texts altogether. The visionaries in these texts typically function as witnesses—their own experience, guilt or suffering are not at the centre of the narrative.

However, in *VF* the situation is slightly different. Though Fursa here too functions as a witness, the emphasis is divided—as we have seen—between gathering information for the benefit of others and being reproved for his own guilt. Our protagonist, Fursa, was a religious man known not only for his visions, but also for the monasteries he founded. He was ostensibly of noble birth, and, wholly in line with the standard heroic biography, would appear to have been the source of miracles even at a young age. The introduction tells us he received monastic training and was of eminently graceful and virtuous character. A large section, concerning his virtues, is presented in a series of laudatory adjectival phrases, which reflects commonplace hagiographical style.⁵¹⁷

(§1-2) Fuit uir uitae uenerabilis Furseus nomine, nobilis quidem genere sed nobilior fide, saeculi dignitate inter suos clarus sed in diuinorum munerum gratia ubique praecipuus. ... Erat enim forma praecipuus, corpore castus, mente deuotus, affabilis colloquio, amabilis aspectu, prudentia praeditus, temperantia clarus, in interna fortitudine firmus, censura iustitiae stabilis, longanimitate largus, patientia robustus, humilitate mansuetus, caritate sollicitus, et ita in eum omnium uirtutum decorem sapientia adornabat, ut secundum apostolum sermo illius semper in gratia sale esset conditus.⁵¹⁸

This character depiction is the first part of the scene setting. It establishes Fursa as a holy and virtuous man and thereby places him in a long line of holy men who were considered worthy to receive visions from the Lord. The climax to the introduction, which builds virtue upon virtue, is not that he built a monastery, but the vision which immediately follows his doing so.

Though the introduction characterises Fursa as a noble and as a monastic founder, there are no explicit references in the text to his ecclesiastical status: he is

⁵¹⁷ Similar introductions with strings of adjectives can be found in e.g. the *Vita Guthlaci*.

⁵¹⁸ 'There was a man of venerable life, named Fursa, noble indeed in birth but nobler in faith; famous among his people in worldly esteem, but distinguished everywhere by grace of divine gifts. ... He was distinguished in figure, chaste of body, devout in mind, affable in conversation, pleasant in appearance, gifted with prudence, famous for moderation, firm in internal fortitude, steadfast in passing judgement, abundant in forbearance, robust in patience, gentle in humility, concerned with charity, and so far did wisdom adorn him with the grace of all the virtues, that his speech was always in grace seasoned with salt, as per the Apostle.' Cf. Col. 4:6.

simply referred to as *uir uenerabilis* (§1), *uir sanctus* (e.g. §3, 8), *uir dei* (§4), *inlustrem uirum* (§5), *uir domini* (§11). Given that he founded multiple monasteries, however, it follows that he probably functioned as abbot at various points in his life.⁵¹⁹ That he may also have fulfilled clerical duties may be implied by the fact that he accepted garments from a sinner upon his death (§16) as well as by the emphasis in Beoán's speech on the balance between a public and private life. Starting at paragraph eleven, however, Fursa is given the epithet *beatus*, which seems important to me in the light of the word's placement in the text. Fursa is referred to by this term from the moment he is shown a glimpse of the entrance to heaven—which itself immediately follows the conclusion of the battle between the devil and the angel—and this usage continues until the end of the vision. The introduction of this new title, in my opinion, indicates a perceived shift in Fursa's spiritual status from one of uncertain standing (that is, with respect to the salvation of his soul) to one who has 'passed the test' and is now worthy, or, as the text says, blessed. If so, this arguably implies a certain level of spiritual transformation as a consequence of the favourable outcome of the battle between the devil and the angel.⁵²⁰ At the end of the narrative this change is in fact confirmed, as Fursa is told that his previous transgressions have been forgiven and he will return to his body with a clean slate (§17). Fursa's function in this vision is thus twofold: he is a reputable ecclesiastic granted a vision urging him to become a messenger upon his return, but simultaneously his own sinfulness is also at the centre of attention. As proof of the experience and the change in himself, he is left with a burn on his body (§17). According to the text, this visionary experience subsequently also significantly altered the course of his life.⁵²¹ He himself thus becomes the living proof of the truth of the vision and a living example of the truth of God.

This dual function operating in *VF* brings us to a second narrative strategy. In our remaining texts (*VT*, *Lóchán*, *TPP*), the visionary starts out as a layman and a

⁵¹⁹ He founded monasteries in Ireland, England (Cnobheresburg) and Lagny. His ability to influence kings and teachers in Ireland, as directed by Beoán, further confirms such a status. Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 116, points out that Fursa is referred to as *antistis* 'superior' in the later *Virtutes*.

⁵²⁰ This is not necessarily in contradiction with the burn he receives right before his departure. See below, 4.1.2.

⁵²¹ Since we know so little about Fursa's life in Ireland this is hard to assess. He may or may not have already been actively engaged in preaching before his vision, but at any rate, his preaching *after* the vision eventually caused him to leave the country.

sinner, but in each case the vision results in a change (for the better) in the protagonist's status or identity. In *VT*, Tnugdál is portrayed—from Marcus' point of view—as an incorrigible sinner who ignores the word of God; Marcus indicates that according to God Tnugdál deserved his punishments.⁵²² At various points in the narrative the angel voices these concerns, e.g. in §3 the angel mentions Tnugdál is guilty of homicide. In addition, Tnugdál is made to suffer the punishments for avarice, theft, gluttony, fornication and accumulating sins (§5-10). Tnugdál suffers violently for his sins, but as a result at least some are forgiven.⁵²³ His return to the body sees him renounce his worldly status: he accepts the body of Christ with thanksgiving, distributes his possessions to the poor and has the sign of the cross affixed to his clothes.⁵²⁴ Afterwards, he also starts preaching the word of God, admonishing his listeners—as the angel did him!—to live a good life.⁵²⁵

In his prologue, Marcus juxtaposes his own view of Tnugdál as negligent in spiritual matters with his social standing to anticipate Tnugdál's corrective process. He introduces Tnugdál by characterising him as an accomplished, esteemed aristocrat, attached to the royal court of the kings of Munster:

... Caselensis de qua ortus est quidam uir nobilis nomine Tnugdálus,
... Erat namque uir prefatus etate iuuenis, genere nobilis, uultu hilaris,
aspect decorus, curialiter nutritus, uestibus compositus, mente
magnanimus, militari arte non mediocriter instructus, habilis, affabilis
atque jocundus ... quanto confidebat in forma corporis et fortitudine,
tanto minus curabat de anime sue eternal salute. ... Ecclesiam dei
neglexerat, pauperes autem Christi etiam uidere nolebat. Scurris
mimis et jocularibus pro uana gloria distribuerat quicquid
habebat.⁵²⁶

⁵²² Marcus writes *Sed cum tot malis diuine misericordie finem dare placuit eum quando uoluit provocauit*, Pfeil, p. 5; 'But when divine mercy chose to put an end to so much evil, he was challenged at the appointed time.' *Tnugdál*, p. 112.

⁵²³ In §7 Tnugdál is made to drive a cow he once stole across the bridge of nails. At the end of the chapter, the angel tells him "*de uacca ulterius ne cures. quia non ei amplius debes.*" Pfeil, p. 22. "Do not worry about the cow anymore, because you have no further obligations in this regard." *Tnugdál*, p. 125.

⁵²⁴ *Sumens igitur corpus Domini cum gratiarum actione omnia que habuit pauperibus dispersit et signum sancte crucis suis uestimentis quibus uestiebatur superponi iussit.* Pfeil, p. 57; *Tnugdál*, p. 156. Cf. Marcus' prologue, *Tnugdál*, p. 113, and Pfeil, p. 7-8.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.* *bonam uitam nos ducere monuit.*

⁵²⁶ Pfeil, p. 6-7; '...Cashel, wherefrom is a certain nobleman, called Tnugdál ... This man was of a young age, of noble lineage, had a happy face and an elegant appearance; he had been brought up in the manner of the court, was carefully dressed, arrogant in spirit and not ill-trained in martial arts, handy, friendly as well as agreeable...as much confidence as he had in his physical appearance and strength, so little did he care for the eternal salvation of his soul. He did not care about God's Church

Yet Marcus contrasts Tnugdál's noble lineage and worldly prowess against his spiritual negligence, and Cashel's elevated position as the seat of the Munster kings with its *spiritually* exalted status as 'Ireland's most eminent see'.⁵²⁷ The underlying sentiment is, of course, Marcus' criticism of the aristocratic lifestyle. In his opinion, Tnugdál ought to be steered onto the right path. The vision has exactly this outcome. In Marcus' epilogue, Tnugdál has changed from a lamentable person, of whom he could not speak without pain, to one who leads an exemplary life he cannot imitate.⁵²⁸ Tnugdál's vision is thus confirmed on the evidence of his changed behaviour and the recognition of his changed status from sinner to (near-)saint. Indeed, Marcus himself asserts that Tnugdál 'vowed to abandon in every manner and forever his former life'⁵²⁹ and that 'his present life bears witness to all the suffering he underwent'.⁵³⁰

Similarly, *TPP* introduces Owein as a knight who has seriously offended God.⁵³¹ Having declared his deep contrition, he refuses to accept the penance proposed by the bishop and insists he shall enter St. Patrick's Purgatory in order to be worthy of receiving the remission of his sins.⁵³² In a variation on the preceding texts, Owein thus sets out deliberately to change himself through the purgatorial experience. Unlike Tnugdál, Owein's character traits serve him well in his mission: he is described as a man of courageous heart (*uirilis animi; uirilem in pectore gerens animum*)⁵³³ who is not easily dissuaded by the danger. The author plays on his knightly virtues when he writes

and did not even want to see Christ's poor. He gave away whatever he had to jesters, players and jugglers.' Amended from *Tnugdál*, p. 111-2.

⁵²⁷ Note that Marcus also carefully creates a mild stylistic parody by using strings of adjectival clauses, a style commonly used for listing laudatory characteristics of a saint at the start of a Saint's Life, as in the paragraph of *VF* quoted above.

⁵²⁸ *Verum quod ego sine dolore non possum dicere ..., Pfeil, p. 5; Tnugdál, p. 111; ... cum magna deuotione et humilitate ac scientia predicabat. Sed nos qui uitam eius imitari non possumus ..., Pfeil, p. 57; Tnugdál, p. 156.*

⁵²⁹ *pristinam uitam in antea se relictum omnimodis uouit. Pfeil, p. 8; Tnugdál, p. 113.*

⁵³⁰ *nam uita eius presens testatur, quecunque patiebatur. Pfeil, p. 6; Tnugdál, p. 112.* Picard translates 'his subsequent life', but it seems to me the text suggests the present—which in turn would suggest Marcus knew Tnugdál to be alive at the time of writing. Cf. Marcus: *Qualia autem uel quanta ibi tormenta passa fuerit, etiam si ipsa taceret, in colore uultus et conversione morum facillime cognoscere poterit, quisquis sapiens notare uoluerit.* 'And had any wise person chosen to notice, he could easily have seen from the colour of the man's face and the complete change in his way of life what terrible torments he suffered there, even if he had kept silent about them.' *Pfeil, p. 17; Tnugdál, p. 121.*

⁵³¹ [*episcopus*] *Deum offendisse grauiter diceret, Easting, p.126, l.210; Patrick's Purgatory, p. 50.*

⁵³² *ut enim remissionem peccatorum accipere merear, Purgatorium sancti Patricii te precipiente ingrediar, Easting, p. 126, ll. 216-7; Patrick's Purgatory, pp. 51-2.*

⁵³³ *Easting, p. 126, l. 218 and p. 127, l. 247.*

Et qui quondam ferro munitus pugnīs interfuit hominū, modo, ferro durior, fide, spe, et iusticia, de Dei misericordia presumens, ornatus, confidenter ad pugnam prorumpit demonum.⁵³⁴

It is this combination of courage and faith which ultimately ensures he is not led astray by the demons, and thereby saves him. Upon his return, he chooses to become a crusader, but he does not go so far as to become a monk himself. His transformation is both spiritual and personal: having survived the Purgatory he can now start afresh, which is evident from the fact that on his way out devils are running away from him frightened.⁵³⁵ However, he does not take up the role of preacher or messenger.

In the *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, we are told that Lóchán and his brothers are known as marauders and church-destroyers—the result of a pledge their parents made to the Devil—in other words, they are pure evil and (seemingly) irredeemable. They trek through the province of Connacht destroying churches, murdering and plundering. When they are about to commit *finéal* ('kinslaying'), Lóchán has his vision. There is no mention in his description of the vision of a message or command laid upon him, nor of him suffering torments, but there is no doubt that it causes Lóchán to change his mind about their chosen path and to convince his brothers that they should follow God from that moment forward (§14). They commit themselves to a year in Christian education and a year of restoring churches (§§25-9) before taking up their sea-voyage. They would appear to remain laymen for the rest of their lives as far as can be determined, but are ultimately brought from Spain to Rome by the Pope.⁵³⁶ In this case, the change in the brothers' behaviour exemplifies the truth of the vision and there is no indication that they go on to function as messengers.

From the examples in these texts, then, it would appear that the visionary may fulfil two different roles. In the older texts, in which the visionary is a *religiosus*, this role is primarily that of a reliable authority, to whom a message is imparted for the benefit of others, and who in turn mediates it to others upon his return. In the later texts, in which the visionary is a layman, the visionary functions rather as a role-model: the

⁵³⁴ *Eastings*, p. 127, ll. 248-51; 'And the man who, armed with an iron sword, had taken part in the battles of men, now armed with faith, hope and justice, confident in God's mercy and stronger than iron, hurls himself boldly into a battle with demons.', *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 53.

⁵³⁵ *Eastings*, p. 149, ll. 1047-51; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 71.

⁵³⁶ The text is in fact ambiguous as to the intent behind their pilgrimage: §32 suggests they are merely curious about the sea, while in §34 the buffoon explains that they are going on a pilgrimage to seek the Lord on the sea. These appear to be features resulting from the text's composite nature. Cf. Breatnach, 'The Transmission', p. 101.

emphasis is on the visionary's personal transformation. The journey becomes one of personal redemption and does not necessarily entail that the visionary becomes a teacher or messenger. Occasionally, however, the visionary tends to act in such a manner as to openly demonstrate his transformation: e.g. the Uí Chorra's restoration efforts and sea-voyage; Tnugdál's public donations; and Owein's crusade. Other minor motifs also establish themselves in this part of the narrative: both Tnugdál and Owein affix a cross to their clothes as an outward token of their inner change.

In addition, two texts stand out because the two identity strategies discussed here appear to converge in them: *VF* and *VT*. *VF*, for all that it is concerned with mediation (both personal and public), places significant emphasis on the sin Fursa inadvertently committed and shows signs of transformation in the visionary, even in the course of the vision. By contrast, *VT* is primarily concerned with Tnugdál's experience, yet also contains exhortations to share this experience for the benefit of others and sees Tnugdál preach the word of God at the end of the vision. Thus *VF* and *VT* may be classed as a mixed type. It is also noteworthy that both texts share a minor motif, namely that of receiving the Eucharist upon their return.⁵³⁷

3.2.2 The Visionary II: Reaction

Ve mihi, ut quid ego non morior?

—*Visio Tnugdali* §12

I have already mentioned above that journeys to the afterworld tend to be presented as tangible experiences in which the visionary actively engages with and reacts to the surroundings.⁵³⁸ More often than not, this is expressed through descriptions of the visionary's sensory and emotional experience. Such descriptions range from his initial confusion or fear to motifs expressing the sensory effect certain locations or characters in the afterworld have on him. Four commonly recurring motifs can be identified in this respect. In addition to fostering the reader's empathy with the visionary, such motifs also tend to be inherently descriptive of the afterworld.

⁵³⁷ There is a parallel for this in the *Vision of Wetti* ((Reichenau?, ca. 824 AD), but there Wetti takes the Eucharist as part of his last rites, as he already knows he will die the next day. See Knittel, H. (ed. and trans.), *Visio Wettini: Einführung, lateinisch-deutsche Ausgabe und Erläuterungen*, Reichenauer Texte und Bilder 12, 3rd edn (Heidelberg: Mattes Verlag, 2009) or the English translation in Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell*, pp. 65-79.

⁵³⁸ See pp. 8, 11 above.

3.2.2.1. Confusion, Fear or Despair

Most commonly, the visionary's initial reaction to the vision encompasses confusion, fear or despair. In Fursa's first (brief) vision, his surprise and confusion take the upper hand and it is clear that he is unable fully to understand what is happening: he can hear angels sing, but he can only make out their singing partially,⁵³⁹ and does not realise that he is no longer in his body until the angel informs him he has to return.⁵⁴⁰ When the angels return him to his body because he has not finished a certain task, he is left feeling confused about this task, grieved that he has no wise person present to advise him, and frightened lest the angels return to find him unprepared.⁵⁴¹ Laisrén, taken aback at the sudden appearance of a bright figure calling him, makes the sign of the cross and trembles with fear.⁵⁴² Once he is taken up and the devils proceed to plead against him, he is so anxious that *Aidblidir lasin anmain a n-oentacraí-sin amal bid biet*.⁵⁴³ In *Red. XI*, Paul, witnessing various punishments, repeatedly says *Et miratus sum et timui timore magno*.⁵⁴⁴

Likewise, Owein, though he sets out boldly, courageous and full of confidence in the Lord, is on occasion said to feel fear and despair. Once inside the cave he expects 'with an intrepid heart the fight with the demons'.⁵⁴⁵ When the devils arrive he hears such an overwhelming roar that he would have lost his mind—had he not been instructed correctly. Only in the ninth torment, when he is thrown in the well, is he nearly overcome by pain. But even there, his faith in the Lord saves

⁵³⁹ §3. *unde pauca uix poterat intellegere*. '[of the singing] he is only able to make out a little'.

⁵⁴⁰ §3. *Tunc primo uir sanctus se corpore exutum cognoscens, sanctis comitibus quo se deferebant inquirat*. 'Only then did the holy man, understanding that he had put off the body, inquire of his holy companions whither they took him.'

⁵⁴¹ §4. *At ille sedens angelicamque claritatem ac dulcedinem mente reuoluens, de quali sollicitudine ammonitus fuisset pertractans, maestus erat quod non habebat ibidem sapientem hominem qui ea quae uiderat clare exponere potuisset, ne reuertentibus angelis eum inuenissent imparatum*. 'But he, sitting up, did turn over in his mind the brightness and sweetness of the angels, and considered of what task he had been advised. He was grieved that he had no wise person there who might plainly expound the things that he had seen, lest the angels when they returned might find him unprepared.' Compare a similar reaction from Peter in Acts 10:17: *et dum intra se haesitaret Petrus quidnam esset uisio quam uidisset* 'Now, whilst Peter was doubting within himself, what the vision that he had seen should mean'. Note that Groves takes *sollicitudine* as 'sin' and reads 'what sort of sin he had been admonished for'.

⁵⁴² VL §1, 2. *Ni ngluais an cetna fecht. ... To-ocaib a cenn la sodain 7 do-beir airde na croichi dara gnuis. ... Crithnaigistar a corp uili an clerigh, a mullach co fonn, lasin nguth n-í-sin*. 'He did not move the first time. ... Thereupon he raised his head, and made the sign of the cross upon his face. ... The cleric's whole body trembled, from crown to sole, at that voice.'

⁵⁴³ §4. ms *ambith*. 'that single plea seemed to the soul as long as the *Beati*.'

⁵⁴⁴ 'And I was amazed and I feared with a great fear'. In §§4, 9, 10. Cf. Luke 2:9-10; Mark 4:40; Jon. 1:10.

⁵⁴⁵ Easting, p. 129, ll.307-8 *animo inpauido demonum pugnam exspectans*; Patrick's Purgatory, p. 55.

him.⁵⁴⁶ In a sense, his relatively calm and stoic demeanor is of course aided by the fact that the name of the Saviour operates as his password for release at every turn.

In Tnugdál's case, however, the author gives a much more emotive expression to his protagonist's experiences. Tnugdál, as soon as he has left the body, is dreadfully frightened and confused and, not knowing what to do, spends a while crying and wailing.⁵⁴⁷ When devils arrive to scare him he fears his death is immanent: *Hic et similibus perterrita nil aliud nisi plangere potuit misera, expectans mortem a cunctis, qui aderant, sibi sine mora minatam.*⁵⁴⁸ When, however, the angel arrives, his fear is replaced by hope, but not for long. Tnugdál is (not surprisingly) afraid for most of the first half of the journey, passing through the punishments. In §6, he is suffering the punishment for avarice and is overcome with sadness and despair: *nisi semet ipsam de preteritis accusare et proprias genas pre nimia tristitia et desperatione potuit lacerare.*⁵⁴⁹ His fear and despair become increasingly worse as they descend: he is overcome by fear, cold, stench, darkness and anguish until he is so overwhelmed he cannot speak or move, such is his terror (*non enim poterat se mouere pre nimia formidine*, § 12). His anguish reaches its peak in the lower hell, where the angel leaves him and he is left distraught, tearing his cheeks and lamenting his plight.⁵⁵⁰ In Marcus' highly structured vision, Tnugdál's increasingly desperate state is symbolic of the progression of his descent and expresses the state souls are expected to be in in those parts of the afterworld. Coming closer to the Devil

⁵⁴⁶ Easting, p. 135, ll. 524-6 *Adeo namque fuit intolerabilis ut pene sui saluatoris sit oblitus nominis. Deo tamen inspirante rediens ad se; Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 63.

⁵⁴⁷ Pfeil, p. 8, §1 *Cum, inquit, anima mea corpus exueret, et illud mortuum esse cognosceret, reatus sui conscia cepit formidare et quid faceret nesciebat. Et quidem timebat, set quid timeret ignorabat. Uolebat ad corpus suum redire, set non poterat intrare, foras etiam ire uolebat, set ubique pertimescebat. Et sic miserrima uolubatur anima reatus sui conscia, in nullo confidens, nisi in dei misericordia. Dumque diutius se ita ageret et flens et plorans tremebunda, quid deberet facere, nesciret.* 'He said: "As soon as my soul had shed my body and knew for sure that it was dead, it became frightened, conscious of his own state of sin, and did not know what to do. It was truly frightened, but did not know what he was dreading. It wanted to go back to its own body but could not get in; it also wanted to go outside, but it was afraid to go anywhere." And so, this most miserable soul tossed and turned, conscious of its own state of sin and confident of nothing except God's mercy. It behaved like this for quite a long time, crying, wailing and shaking, for he did not know what to do'. Amended from Tnugdál, p. 114.

⁵⁴⁸ §1. Pfeil, p. 9. 'Terrified by these and similar utterances, the poor soul could do nothing but wail, expecting from all those around him the imminent death he had been threatened with.' Tnugdál, p. 114.

⁵⁴⁹ Pfeil, p. 17. 'what could [he] do except blame himself for his past deeds and lacerate his cheeks out of an immense sadness and despair.' Tnugdál, p. 121.

⁵⁵⁰ Pfeil, p. 35. *nimio furore repleta in semet ipsam exarsit. et genas suas unguis lacerans clamauit.* "Ve mihi, ut quid ego non morior?" 'he was filled with great anger and became incensed at himself. Tearing his cheeks with his nails he shouted out: "Woe to me! Why do I not die?" Tnugdál, p. 136.

himself, Tnugdál increasingly becomes like the devils: lamenting, despairing and tearing his cheeks. He becomes ruled by anger and fear in the absence of God and the angel.⁵⁵¹ The apparent equation between Tnugdál and the devils through his overt emotional expression appears to be as deliberate as it is unusual: in the other visions these expressions are mostly limited to observations rather than gesticulations. The reason may be that these are unusual or unbefitting as has been argued by Esther Cohen, who points out that *gesticulatio* was condemned in ecclesiastical writings as far back as the writings of John Chrysostom (†407 AD, he does not yet use that term), had negative connotations, and appears to have been particularly associated with punishment.⁵⁵²

3.2.2.2 Feelings of Joy near Angels or upon Entering Heaven

Fursa's encounter with the angels, and in particular their singing, affect him noticeably: when the three angels first come to fetch him, he is overcome with a deeply pleasant feeling at seeing and hearing them:

Hi tres caelicolae, splendentes pari fulgore, mirae suauitatis
dulcedinem alarum sonitu carminum modolamine conspectus
pulchritudine illi animae inserebant.⁵⁵³

The angels also sing when Fursa is returned to his body, so that *anima in corpus intrauerit huius carminis suauitate laetificata*.⁵⁵⁴ Likewise, in §11, when Fursa is granted a glimpse of the *supernus conuentus*, he sees brightness erupt from the doorway and is overcome with joy at the sound of the angels singing:

Tunc anima illius ad dulcedinem superni modolaminis ac sonitum
ineffabilis laetitiae ultra caelum sonantis intendens, circumfulsit ...
tunc mens omnem laborem tribulationis obliuiscens, inmensa
conplebatur laetitia ... pro se solo decantari computabat⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ Compare the description of the devils in §1, where they lacerate their cheeks at him in anger.

⁵⁵² Cohen, E., 'The Animated Pain of the Body', *American Historical Review* 105:1 (2000) 36-68, pp. 53-5. Face-scratching is one of the acts lamented by John Chrysostom (quoted in Cohen).

⁵⁵³ §3. 'These three inhabitants of heaven, shining with equal brightness, introduced to his soul a sweetness of wonderful pleasantness by sound of their wings, by the melody of their song and also by the beauty of their appearance.' Note the usage of *inserebant* here, which implies agency on the part of the angels.

⁵⁵⁴ §4. 'his soul, gladdened by the sweetness of this song, entered his body'. Cf. below, 3.2.4 regarding the implications of this passage.

⁵⁵⁵ §11. 'Then his soul, intent upon the sweetness of the heavenly melody and the sound of unspeakable joy sounding beyond the heaven, glowed ... then his mind, forgetting all suffering of tribulation, was filled with great joy.... he reckoned [the song] to have been sung for himself alone.'

Though there is no parallel in *Lóchán* for the heavenly bliss that Fursa experiences, we may observe that this text also mentions the joyous effect of music. *Lóchán* sees Michael, in the form of a bird, singing to the Creator and his singing was sweeter than every melody.⁵⁵⁶

Similar to Fursa's experience is Owein's: upon his arrival at the bejewelled wall, the door opens to him and an intensely sweet fragrance pours out to him, from which he gathers so much strength that he feels he would now be able to sustain any torment.⁵⁵⁷ In addition, at the end of the archbishops' speech, he receives a taste of the heavenly manna. He is asked to look up at a golden sky, which, they explain, is the gate of the heavenly paradise, through which the chosen ones enter heaven and through which those in the earthly paradise are fed with celestial food. This food comes down to them like a flame of fire and enters them through the head. Owein's sensation is described as follows:

Unde tantam delect[at]ionis dulcedinem in corde et corpore sensit ut
pene pre nimietate dulcedinis non intellexerit utrum uiuus an mortuus
fuisset.⁵⁵⁸

Like Fursa, then, he is given a brief experience (here a 'taster' instead of a 'glimpse') of heavenly bliss. Unlike in *VF*, the emphasis here is on the sustenance that experience offers. However, in both texts, the gates of the heavenly paradise are placed in the sky. It is likely that *TPP* draws on *VF* in this regard.⁵⁵⁹

Tnugdál—in contrast to his experience in the lower hell—fares much better once he enters the place of the moderate punishments. He expresses wonder at the sudden change to pleasant feelings and sensations: he feels happy and secure instead of fearful and timid, and is delighted that there is no bad odour (§14).⁵⁶⁰ When he sees the plain of joy, he is delighted by its sweetness and shouts out blessings and jubilations from Scripture, thanking the Lord for freeing him and exclaiming that

⁵⁵⁶ §14. *ba binne na gach ceol a canad.*

⁵⁵⁷ *Eastang*, p. 141, ll. 761-3 *tante suauitatis odor ei occurrens per eam exit ut, sicut uidebatur, si totus mundus in aromata uerteretur, non uinceret huius magnitudinem suauitatis. Tantasque uires ex ea percepit suauitate ut existimaret se tormenta, que pertulerat, iam posse sine molestia sustinere;* *Patrick's Purgatory*, p.65 (§16).

⁵⁵⁸ *Eastang*, p. 144-4, qtd. ll. 896-8 (§18) 'From it he felt such a delicious sweetness both in his heart and in his body that he was hardly able to make out whether he was alive or dead, so extreme was the sweetness.' *Patrick's Purgatory*, p.70.

⁵⁵⁹ See further 4.1.1.2 below.

⁵⁶⁰ "*tristis et leta sum. passa per totam uiam illam intolerabilem fetorem. nunc uero nullum malum sentio odorem. timida eram. et ualde formidolosa. nunc autem gaudens sum et segura.*" Pfeil, p. 41.

now he knows Scripture to be true (§15).⁵⁶¹ As in the preceding section, his reaction primarily reflects the effect his environment has on him.

Parallels for these motifs can be found in *FA* as well, where they are incorporated in the descriptions of the various localities. In §21, which describes the Creator, we read that he has choirs around him singing to him, and that *binnithir ilcheólu in domuin cech oencheól fo leith díb-side feissin*.⁵⁶² In addition, in §24, in the description of the heavenly city, we have both the motif of sweet music, here produced by three stones, and the motif of fragrance as sustenance, here coming from seven thousand candles.⁵⁶³ A variant of the same two motifs appears also in the description of the land of saints, where the text appears to suggest that both provide sustenance.⁵⁶⁴ Noticeably, in *FA*'s summary of Acts 10:10-16, in which Peter witnesses the four-cornered vessel descend, the motif of sweet music, which is not in the original, is added.⁵⁶⁵

The usage of motifs like beautiful singing, sweet fragrance and celestial food is in no way unique to these visions, but represent a commonplace means of translating the otherworldly or supernatural beauty of the divine realms into the universal language of tangible human experience.⁵⁶⁶ Parallels for these themes may be found in (near-)contemporary visionary or religious works, and become stereotypes. For instance, in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, visions are regularly accompanied by bright light, angelic singing and sweet fragrance. The pope, in fact,

⁵⁶¹ *in speciosi campi nimium delectata dulcedine; talem prorupit in uocem cum magna deuotione. "Sit nomen Domini benedictum. ex hoc nunc et usque in seculum; qui de portis inferi liberauit me. secundum multitudinem miserationum suarum. et introduxit me in partem sortis sanctorum. Nunc ego cognosco uerissima esse uerba scripture sancte."* *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.

⁵⁶² 'Each single song of them, by itself, is sweeter than the many songs of the world.'

⁵⁶³ *trí leca lógmara ... co fogur mbláith, co mbinne cheóil*. 'three precious stones ... with a melodious sound, with the sweetness of music'; and *Fir domain i n-oenbaile cidat línmair, nos foirfed do biud boltnugud cinn oenchainle dina cainnlib-sin*. 'The fragrance of the head of a single candle of those candles would provide for the men of the world [gathered] in a single place, even though they would be very many.'

⁵⁶⁴ §13. *Ar ní aidilcniget ind noím ó ní aile acht éistecht in cheóil risa coistet 7 innithmigud inna soillse ad-déicet 7 a sásad don boltnugud fil isin tír*. 'For the saints have no need of anything apart from hearing the music to which they listen, and contemplating the radiance on which they gaze, and taking their fill of the fragrance which is in the land.'

⁵⁶⁵ §9 *Binnithir cach ceól a éistecht*. 'To listen to it was as sweet as any song.' Cf. Carey, 'Fís Adomnáin'; Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 181.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. Arnold Smeets, who writes, in relation to similar motifs in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*, "Seeing light, feeling fear; these elements, together with hearing and smelling, give the story the glance of a total human experience, strengthening the reality effect of a spiritual vision." See Smeets, A., 'The Dazzle of Dawn: Visions, Dreams, and Thoughts on Dreams by Gregory the Great', in Koet, B. J. (ed.), *Dreams as Divine Communication in Christianity: From Hermas to Aquinas*, Studies in the History and Anthropology of Religion 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pp. 157-78, p. 173.

provides a parallel for Fursa's experience: he writes that the sound of heavenly singing frequently accompanies the death of the elect and prevents their suffering.⁵⁶⁷ It is not unlikely that the author of *VF* drew on this or similar ideas for his description of Fursa's 'going-out'.

3.2.2.3 Grief at Separation from Heaven or the Heavenly Company

As blissful as the experience of heaven and its angels is, it is all the more grievous for the soul to have to depart again from that bliss, for, as the angel informs Tnugdál in *VT*, *nullum est tam graue supplicium. sicut sequestratum esse a consortio diuine maiestatis. et sanctorum angelorum.*⁵⁶⁸ The angel explains to Tnugdál that this is why sinners are shown the heavenly rewards before being sent to the torments, that is, to increase their punishment. By contrast, the righteous are shown the punishments first, so that they will praise God even more.⁵⁶⁹ In the context of the journey, the punishments and rewards serve as a warning and a reminder. So too, do the last few chapters in *VT*: having come through the punishments and as far as the nine orders of the angels, Tnugdál meets St. Rúadán, St. Patrick and four other Irish bishops. The text thus establishes a direct connection between Tnugdál's earthly community in Ireland and the community in heaven, effectively proving to him that it is possible for the righteous to reach heaven, as well as suggesting that the reform movement is particular favoured by God. Tnugdál, confronted at this point with the message that he has to return to his body, naturally expresses sorrow and weeps.⁵⁷⁰

Like Tnugdál, Owein, having only just experienced the heavenly food in paradise, naturally laments the fact that he must return *ad huius uite miseriam*.⁵⁷¹ It is notable, however, that in this text his experience is contrasted with Patrick's, related in the prologue. Patrick, while being granted an apparition of Christ, has not

⁵⁶⁷ E.g. *Dial.* IV.15.

⁵⁶⁸ 'no torture is harsher than to be separated from communion with the divine majesty and the holy angels'. *Pfeil*, pp. 126-7; *Tnugdál*, p. 128.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Pfeil*, pp. 56-7; *Tnugdál*, pp. 155-6.

⁵⁷¹ *Eastings*, pp. 145, ll. 909-11 *Ad hec uerba pauescens miles magno merore pontificibus supplicare cepit ne a tanto leticia ad erumpnas huius seculi redire cogeretur*. 'When he heard these words, the knight became frightened and in the greatest sorrow started to beg the archbishops not to force him to leave such bliss for the tribulations of this world.' *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 70-1; *Eastings*, pp. 148-9 ll. 1045-7 *Egressus itaque, sicut supradiximus, miles de paradyso, lugens eo quod a tanta felicitate ad huius uite miseriam redire cogeretur*. 'Having left the paradise, as we said, the knight was lamenting the fact that he was forced to leave such bliss to go back to the misery of this life' *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 71.

been to hell and paradise and has not had a similar experience to Owein; instead he is joyful at having been granted an apparition of Christ and at being granted his aid.⁵⁷²

Fursa's expressions of grief, like those of joy, are recorded both for his first and second vision. At the end of the first, he is said to be *tedio separandi a societate angelica affectus*.⁵⁷³ When the angels send him back, he is informed he needs to resume his body *quoadusque debitam reportaret sollicitudinem*.⁵⁷⁴ Equally, when Beoán and Meldán tell him that he must return to his body, he is saddened (*tristitia stupefactus*).⁵⁷⁵ At the very end of his second vision, we find a motif related to these expressions of reluctance to return, namely expressions of fear of the body or abhorrence of it. Fursa is afraid of his cadaver—as it is now designated—which now appears alien to him.⁵⁷⁶ The angel's reply here makes it clear that this is not least because it is considered a vessel of sickness, sin and weakness.⁵⁷⁷ This stands in direct contrast with his soul, which has only just been cleansed. Again, parallels for such expressions of grief may be found in *FA*. In §38 we are told that the wretched soul *scarthair ... co áigthide ⁊ co acarb ⁊ co aduathmar fri frencarcus flatha nime ⁊ gnúisse Dé [and] fri comairge inna n-archaíngel lasa tucad co ríched*.⁵⁷⁸

3.2.2.4 Grief when Witnessing Souls Suffering

A fourth motif is associated specifically with *VSP* and texts related to it. This is the visionary's expression of grief at the sight of souls suffering. We find this motif in

⁵⁷² Easting, p. 124, ll. 135-7 *iocunditate spirituali repletus est beatus Patricius tam pro Domini sui apparitione quam pro fosse illius ostensione, per quam sperabat populum ab errore conuersum*. 'blessed Patrick was filled with spiritual joy not only because his Lord has appeared to him but also because he had shown him this pit by means of which he hoped the people would turn away from their errors.' *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 48.

⁵⁷³ 'overcome with grief at parting from the angelic fellowship'.

⁵⁷⁴ 'until he should complete his due task'. Groves suggests that *sollicitudine* here means 'sin'. *Sollicitudo* is, however, used earlier in the text as well with its regular meaning of 'concern, care, anxiety, worries'. The *sollicitudo* referred to here is mentioned again in the next line, where it has to be *completa* ('complete, fulfilled'). It seems to me that what is intended here is a certain 'concern' which is preventing Fursa from entering the afterlife. It is not a great leap to call this a sin, but I am not convinced this interpretation fits within the overall scheme of the text. If it were 'sin' that was intended here, then he would have been eligible to enter heaven after his slate is wiped clean at the end of the second vision. I think it more likely, therefore, that it refers forward to the task which he is given; that of preaching. Given that this scene leaves Fursa notably confused (as mentioned above), this first vision serves as a dramatic introduction to both Fursa's main vision and the mission arising from it.

⁵⁷⁵ §12 *At ille tacens et huius nuntii tristitia stupefactus*.

⁵⁷⁶ §17 *Tunc ille quasi ignotum cadauer timens noluit se ibidem adpropinquare*.

⁵⁷⁷ §17 The angel says: "*Noli timere ... hoc suscipere corpus, quod sine ulla repugnatione infirmitatis uel uitiorum repugnantium quamuis inualidum habere potes*."

⁵⁷⁸ 'parted, terribly and harshly and fearsomely, from the presence of the kingdom of heaven and the countenance of God' and 'from the protection of the archangels by whom it was brought to heaven'.

Red. VI and *Red. XI*. In the former, as we have seen above, Paul expresses grief when he learns that his parents are suffering: *Et eiectauit se sanctus Paulus super inferno et coepit amariter plorare* (§11). In *Red. XI* Paul—speaking in the 1st person singular—says “*Et lacrimatus sum oculis meis*” (§6). In both cases this is followed by the angel questioning him as to why he is crying.⁵⁷⁹ However, only in *Red. XI* is this question accompanied by the reproach that Paul could not possibly be more merciful than the Lord, as in *VSP*: “...numquid tu plus misericordiam habes quam Deus...?”.⁵⁸⁰ In *Red. VI* this remark is left out and the question is raised solely in the context of Paul’s parents suffering in hell.

We find a variant of this motif, however, in the epilogue to *FA*, in the section on Elijah—which in turn gave rise to a secondary text known as *Dá Brón Flatha Nime*⁵⁸¹—which relates that Elijah and the bird-souls accompanying him are saddened at the thought of the tortures in hell (§§60-2).

The four motifs just mentioned cannot be said to be integral elements of the genre as a whole, but are rather different expressions of the desire to record the visionary’s reaction to the vision in one way or another. As I hope to have indicated, these are often expressions closely related to the nature of certain afterworld locations so that the reaction may be said to reflect or comment on it. They are certainly also closely related to the identity of the individual: in line with the message of these journeys that each soul is judged according to its merits, the status of the visionary as sinful or righteous determines the possible and suitable reactions that may occur. In turn, such reactions, I would argue, provide, *within* the text (narrative level), a precedent for the desired reaction of the reader to the vision text itself (communicative level)—which by extension foreshadows the reader’s own journey to the afterworld. The pattern that arises out of this analysis complements quite neatly that arising out of the previous section. It is clear that *VF*, *VT* and *TPP* follow a similar pattern, which is reflected in *FA* to an extent, but only to a lesser degree in those texts which have been identified as having an identity strategy involving an authoritative messenger. These three texts can be said to provide a

⁵⁷⁹ *Red. VI* reads *Quid ploras?* and *Quid tale grauiter ploras?* (§6). *Red. XI* reads *Quare ploras?* (§6).

⁵⁸⁰ §6 “surely you do not have more mercy than God?”. We may here compare the text of *VSP*. *Red. XI* appears to be closest to the *P* version of *L¹* in this instance, which reads: *Numquid tu magis misericors es quam Deus?*. *VSP* §33, Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 140.

⁵⁸¹ Carey, ‘*Fís Adomnáin*’, notes to §§60-2.

fuller sensory expression of the visionary's experience during the journey. It must be recognised, however, that *Lóchán*, *SVA* and *VL* provide, due to their brevity, insufficient evidence to draw any real conclusions from.

Table 13 Reaction of the Visionary and Effect of the Vision

Reaction	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	VF	VT	TPP	Lóchán
confusion, fear or despair	•		•			•	•	•	
feelings of joy (near angels/heaven)				(•)		•	•	•	(•)
grief at separation from angels/heaven	-			(•)		•	•	•	
grief when witnessing suffering		•	•	(•)					

After the vision:

preaching (mediation)	•			•	•	•	•		
change of lifestyle	-				(•) ^λ	•	•	•	•
act or token representing change	-					•	•	•	•

(•) in 3rd person λ is advocated

3.2.3 The Visionary III: Place, Time, Disposition

The visionary's general situation and disposition at the time of receiving his vision are frequently commented upon, especially with respect to his mental or physical health. The proposition has been offered before that the visionary should be understood to be in some sort of altered state of mind, whether through illness or ascetic practice. As mentioned above, Carozzi has previously argued that the visionary is normally at death's door:⁵⁸²

C'est un genre littéraire particulier caractérisé par le récit d'un homme —il n'y a quasiment pas de femmes parmi les voyageurs—, apparemment mort et revenu à lui, et dont l'âme, détachée du corps, a parcouru sous la conduite d'un guide les lieux où résident les morts.

⁵⁸² Of course, examples of this are found also in much earlier sources. E.g. the examples in Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* XII.12.

... Parfois, cependant, la séparation de l'âme se fait par le moyen du songe, mais la mort apparente est le cas le plus fréquent.⁵⁸³

This is, however, as we shall see, not as straightforwardly the case in the texts discussed here as it is for Carozzi. It has also previously been observed that visions tend to take place at a certain time, especially, for instance, at midnight.⁵⁸⁴ Some of these features clearly represent stock motifs by the time our key texts were written. This section reviews the deployment of these features in the texts. The only texts in which no sketch of the visionary's situation is present are the Redactions and *SVA*.

First, *VF* and *VT* would seem to support Carozzi's contention. Fursa falls ill while on the road and loses the ability to move:

(§2) ...dum patriam parentesque uisitare properaret ... quadam die corporis egrotantis molestia corripitur ... ac haud longe a domo uespertinalem exorsus psalmodiam, orationi intentus, tenebris subito circumdatus restitit; nec enim pedes mouere infirmatus ualebat, sed quasi iam mortuus ad proximam deportatus est casam⁵⁸⁵

The location of the onset of his illness is rather unclear, as we do not know for certain where Fursa's parents lived, but the text is very clear about the time: at vespers. It also specifies that the illness came suddenly and gave him a death-like appearance. When Fursa succumbs again, two days later, he shows similar signs:

(§5) Medio uero nocte tertia feria ... tenebris inruentibus, pedes eius frigore ingrauati duruerunt; ... decidensque in lectum quasi somno grauatus.⁵⁸⁶

The pattern is only slightly different: the vision now occurs at midnight and Fursa's physical state is now compared to sleeping. However, we are now told that his body goes cold when this happens, which again suggests a death-like state. His return and awakening are indicated by a reversal of these symptoms:

(§4) Tuncque pullorum cantu, roseo colore uultum perfusus, in momento temporis anglicis cessantibus carminibus audiuit uerba

⁵⁸³ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 5.

⁵⁸⁴ See above, n. 34.

⁵⁸⁵ 'while he hastened to visit his family and fatherland ... on a certain day he was seized by disease upon his afflicted body ... But not very far from home, intent on prayer, as he began the evening psalms he stood still, suddenly surrounded by darkness. And he was sick so that he could not move his feet, but like one already dead he was borne to the nearest house.'

⁵⁸⁶ 'On the third night in the middle of the night ... darkness came suddenly upon him, and his feet, overcome by cold, stiffened; ... falling upon his bed as if overcome by sleep.' Cf. §17 *quasi ex profunda mortis quiete*.

admirantium; ac paulatim uestimentis superpositis mouentibus
denudauerunt faciem eius.⁵⁸⁷

Fursa's visionary episodes only last a night,⁵⁸⁸ but he stays ill for three days in total until his visions are completed.

In *VT* Marcus writes that Tnugdál went to visit his dear friend (*amicus sodalis*) in Cork in order to resolve an outstanding debt owed to him. He stays with his friend for three nights before he brings up the debt. When he is told his friend cannot pay, he falls into a rage and prepares to leave, but his friend entreats him to stay and have a meal with him. As he lays down his axe and sits down for dinner God intervenes:

peruenit diuina pietas hunc appetitum. Nescio namque cita qua occasione percussus manum, quam extenderat, replicare non poterat ad os suum. Tunc terribiliter clamare cepit ... "Custodi", inquit, "meam securim, nam ego morior!" Et tunc uerbotenus corpus ex anime continuo corruit, ac si nullatenus spiritus antea ibi fuisset. Assunt signa mortis, crines candent, frons obduratur, errant oculi, nasus acuitur, pallescunt labia, mentum cadit, et uniuersa corporis membra rigescunt.⁵⁸⁹

We are told that he remained in this state from the tenth hour on Wednesday until the same hour on Saturday. The tenth hour would have been late afternoon to early evening—it is possibly to be equated with vespers—which fits with the idea that Tnugdál and his host were about to have dinner.

In both these works, the visionary's condition is visibly altered to a state in which he appears to be dead or near death. The stiffening cold limbs and pallor are of course universal signs of death, but in the Middle Ages it would appear to have been perceived specifically as an absence of the senses. As John Carey has previously illustrated, we have in *LU* a passage in which the author enumerates

⁵⁸⁷ 'And then, at fowl-crow, at the instant when the songs of the angels ceased, his countenance was suffused with a rosy colour, and he heard the words of them that looked on; and as the cloths covering him had moved, they gradually uncovered his face'.

⁵⁸⁸ §4, *At illi respondentes omnem rei referebant ei ordinem, qualiter uespertinali hora transiens usque ad gallorum cantus corpus exanime in medio seruassent.* 'And answering him they told him everything in order; how that from the evening hour until cock-crow they watched over his lifeless body in their midst.'

⁵⁸⁹ Pfeil, p. 7. 'God's mercy forestalled his appetite. For, struck by I know not what sudden occurrence, he was not able to lift to his mouth the hand he had stretched in front of him. Then he started to shout dreadfully "Keep my axe, for I am dying!" And with these words, his body immediately collapsed unconscious, as if there had never been any spirit in it. The symptoms of death are present: the hair is white, the forehead numb, the eyes hazy, the nose becomes pointed, the lips go pale, the chin falls and all the limbs of the body become stiff.' *Tnugdál*, p. 112.

various instances of the temporary absence of the soul, among which he identifies a *reméc* ‘fore-death’ as *fothudchestu* ‘rapture’ and *subductio*.⁵⁹⁰ The principle of *subductio* can be understood in the context of Augustine of Hippo’s discussion of 2 Cor 12 in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, in which he describes *subductio* as a temporary absence of the soul from the body, during which it wears a semblance of the body and during which it is ‘snatched away from the senses’ so that the body lies senseless, yet not wholly dead.⁵⁹¹ In both Fursa’s and Tnugdál’s case, their return is portrayed as a re-awakening to the senses. Fursa’s return to the body is marked by a return of his natural colour, sight and movement, and by now being able to hear the voices of those standing around him (§4)—which he was naturally previously unable to, having been separated from his senses. In fact, the text marks the precise point of transition of his sensory awareness from heaven, where he can hear the angels, to earth, where he can hear his companions: *in momento temporis angelicis cessantibus carminibus audiuit uerba admirantium*.⁵⁹² Likewise, Tnugdál’s re-awakening is characterised by his returning consciousness—literally his life (*resumpsit spiritum*)—and breath as well as by a renewed sense of gravity.⁵⁹³

In *FA* we are not informed of any such sensory experiences on Adomnán’s part, nor of the place of its occurrence or his disposition. The only information given is that *ro escomla a ainimm asa churp i féil Iohain Baaptaist*.⁵⁹⁴ This reference is problematic at it would seem to indicate that he saw the vision when he died. The belief that Adomnán died on the feast of the Conception of John the Baptist is attested in the Middle Irish *Betha Adamnáin*.⁵⁹⁵ However, the text further on in the narrative comments that Adomnán preached his vision during his lifetime.⁵⁹⁶ There

⁵⁹⁰ Carey, J., ‘Werewolves in Medieval Ireland’, *CMCS* 44 (2002) 37-72, p. 44. He points out that *fothudchestu* is not otherwise attested and appears to be a new coining to translate *subductio*.

⁵⁹¹ *De Genesi ad Litteram* XII.23.60. I have used the translation by Carey, p. 46. Hill, *On Genesis*, translates Augustine’s *subductio* in its other attested meaning ‘hauling ashore of a ship’.

⁵⁹² See n. 587.

⁵⁹³ Thus the Prologue and Conclusion. *Pfeil*, pp. 7, 57. *Tnugdál*, pp. 113, 157.

⁵⁹⁴ §10 ‘his soul passed out of his body on the feast of John the Baptist’.

⁵⁹⁵ Herbert, M. and P. Ó Riain (ed. and trans.), *Betha Adamnáin: The Irish Life of Adomnán*, ITS 54 (London: ITS, 1988), p. 85. They note that later martyrologies list a date of September 24th instead of the 23rd. There are additional conflicting traditions which confuse the Conception of John the Baptist (September 23) with the Decollation (August 29th), as a result of which we also see the association between Adomnán and prophecies involving the Decollation in the *Second Vision of Adomnán*. Cf. the Introduction in Appendix A.

⁵⁹⁶ § 55. ‘This, then, is the sermon which Adomnán was in the habit [of preaching] to the hosts from that time forth, for as long as he was alive. Moreover, it is that which he was preaching in the great assembly of the men of Ireland, when the law of Adomnán was imposed upon the Gaels, and when

were evidently multiple traditions surrounding his death, but *FA* does not appear to belong amongst them.

In *VL* Laisrén is said to have fasted for three *tredain* ('three-day fasts', i.e. nine days), when he is suddenly overcome by sleep:

(§1) Ro aín tri tredna la glanad na cille. I forciunn an tres tredain do-forthrom cotlad fair isin derrthach. Cu cuala trena cotlad in guth ...⁵⁹⁷

He is, as outlined in chapter two, in *Cluain Caín* in Connacht, to cleanse a church (§1). There is thus no indication that he is ill, though it can be argued that his prolonged fasting, a common motif in relation to visionary experiences, may be associated with an altered state of mind.⁵⁹⁸ His vision commenced at night, as it was dark around him and *bai drechd din aidchi beos*.⁵⁹⁹

Fasting is also carried out by Patrick, as described in the prologue to *TPP*, immediately prior to the apparition of Christ. Patrick is faced with a number of prospective converts who refuse to believe in his promises and ask to be shown the torments of the wicked and the joys of the just. However, Christ comes to Patrick's aid:

Beatus uero Patricius, Deo deuotus, etiam tunc pro salute populi deuotior in uigiliis, ieiuniis et orationibus, atque operibus bonis

the women were freed by Adomnán, and by Fínnachta Fledach the king of Ireland, and by the nobles of Ireland besides.'

⁵⁹⁷ 'He fasted for three three-day periods while cleansing the church. At the end of the third three-day period, sleep overcame him in the oratory. In his sleep he heard a voice...'

⁵⁹⁸ There exists a long tradition associating fasting with visionary experiences. Jewish mystics are believed to have attempted to induce visionary experiences by undergoing ritual fasting. See e.g. Segal, A.F., 'Paul and the Beginning of Jewish Mysticism', in Collins, J. J. and M. Fishbane (eds.), *Death, Ecstasy, and Otherworldly Journeys* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 93-120, p. 98, who describes the method mystics used for inducing a mystical 'out of body' experience as "[placing] their heads between their knees (the posture Elijah assumed when praying for rain in 1 Kgs 18:42), reciting repetitious psalms, glossolalic incantations, and mantralike prayers, which are recorded in abundance in the hekhalot literature." For a different opinion on this matter see Himmelfarb, M., 'The Practice of Ascent in the Ancient Mediterranean World', in Collins, J. J. and M. Fishbane (eds.), *Death, Ecstasy, and Otherworldly Journeys* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 121-36. We find the same association between asceticism and visions in early Christian Egypt. Athanasius' *Vita Anthonii* and Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* are two important sources for the transmission of these ideas into the West. See chapter 2 of Moreira, *Dreams, Visions* on the assimilation of these ideas in Merovingian Gaul. In addition, the Irish *filid* are said to have practiced *imbis forosna* in which they induced visions. See, for instance, the discussion and translations of the relevant parts of *Sanas Cormaic* in Chadwick, N.K., 'Imbas Forosnai', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 4:2 (1935) 97-135.

⁵⁹⁹ §2 'a portion of the night still remained'.

effectus est. Et quidem dum talibus pro salute populi intenderet bonis,
pius dominus ihesus christus ei uisibiliter apparuit⁶⁰⁰

There is no indication that Patrick is asleep, however, while Lóchán, on the other hand, was in a deep (alcohol-induced) slumber: *Is annsin rothuit a thoirrthim suain 7 codalta ar Lochan*.⁶⁰¹ There is no indication of the length of his experience.

The knight Owein in *TPP*, moreover, is alive and well, showing no signs of sickness, when he voluntarily enters the pit of Patrick's Purgatory. His journey lasts a full day, from morning to morning.⁶⁰² However, Owein is prepared for his journey during fifteen days of prayers and fasting, and completes another fifteen days of prayers and vigils upon his return. This ritualistic preparation sets him apart from everyone else as a penitent, and is without a doubt intended to put him in an altered state of mind in preparation for his entrance into Purgatory. This type of preparation again has ascetic connotations.

To conclude, then, we have two clear groups: *Red. VI*, *Red. XI* and *SVA* do not refer to either sleep or illness or any other circumstances concerning the vision; and *FA* mentions only one of them. In the second group, *VF*, *VL*, *Lóchán*, *VT* and *TPP* all mention place, time and disposition; and *VF*, *VT* and *TPP* also mention duration. Note that, with the exception of *VL*, this again largely corresponds with the grouping identified in 3.1 above. This suggest two separate models for characterising the visionary. Concerning the individual motifs, only two of our visionaries in the second group are said to be near death or in a death-like condition, whilst two were asleep, and one awake. In addition, three of them (Patrick, Owein, Laisrén) were fasting just prior to the vision. The majority of the visions take place in the evening or at night, with the notable exception of *TPP*. Regarding time and disposition, then, there is a reasonable amount of cohesion within group two. We have less reliable information regarding the duration of the visions: one of them, *VT*, last for three days; so does Fursa's experience, though this reflects rather the duration of Fursa's illness than that of his visions, which only last a night; and the third, *TPP*, lasts a full day.

⁶⁰⁰ 'So, blessed Patrick, devoted to God, became even more dedicated for the salvation of this people by doing vigils, fasts, prayers and good deeds. And while he was striving towards this good for the salvation of the people, the pious Lord Jesus Christ visibly appeared to him'

⁶⁰¹ 'Then a deep slumber and sleep fell upon Lochan' Stokes, 'The Voyage', pp. 30-1.

⁶⁰² *Easting*, p. 126, l. 199 *iterum mane. Tnugdal*, p. 50.

Table 14 Situation and Disposition of the Visionary

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	Lochán	VT	TPP
Place	on the road	in the church in <i>Cluain Caín</i>	-	-	-	-	Clogher	Cork, at a friend's house	the Purgatory
Time	vespers to cock-crow/midnight	at night	-	-	date: Feast of John	-	evening/night	10 th hour	morning
Duration	a night/ 3 days	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wed-Sat	a full day
Disposition	death-like illness	fasting, asleep	-	-	-	-	asleep	death-like illness	awake, fasting

3.2.4 The Visionary IV: Separation of Body and Soul

It will be evident at this point in the discussion that one of the central aspects of the *uisio* is the ‘going-out’ (Irish *escomlúth*) of the soul from the body. Generally speaking, this is taken as a given, yet again our texts complicate the paradigm, so to speak, though largely because of lack of evidence. Four of our visionaries, Fursa, Laisrén, Adomnán and Tnugdál, are said to be separated from their body during the vision; one, the knight Owein, travels in his body, while three cases (*Lóchán*, *Red. XI* and *SVA*) provide no evidence. In *VF*, *VL*, and *Red. XI*, moreover, 2 Cor 12 is quoted or paraphrased to indicate that the soul is unaware how it left the body. The same might be implied for Tnugdál, who is said to be frightened and uncertain when he realises he has left the body, but there is no quotation or paraphrase.

Whilst *VF* actually describes four visions, the second is the main vision, with the first operating, as it were, as preparation for it. The first vision gives the most detailed description of Fursa’s ‘going-out’. As we have seen above, it is not clear to Fursa at first what has happened and he only realises that he has left his body when he overhears the angels talk about returning him (§3). Nevertheless, for the duration of the vision his *corpus* is *exanime* (§4).⁶⁰³ In addition, the text specifies the method of departure: *Leuantibusque eum angelis* (§6).⁶⁰⁴ The angels are the acting agents

⁶⁰³ Elsewhere in the text he is described as *uisione corporis sublatu* H ‘in a vision taken out of the body’ (§19)

⁶⁰⁴ ‘and the angels lifting him’.

here. Their powerful role as psychopomps is illustrated indirectly in the text through the motif, discussed 3.2.2 above, of the joyous effect of the angelic music. Their music not only infuses Fursa with joy, but it marks the act of taking him out of and returning him to the body: it is the very first thing he hears when he is taken up and the very last thing he hears when he returns. The psalm sung at the opening of this section is Ps 83:8 *Ibunt (sancti) de uirtute...* At the end, the last thing he hears is the response to the psalm *Videbitur deus deorum in Sion*. The psalm is about a desire to dwell with God and his reward to those who trust in him. It thus functions, as it were, as a commentary on the scene, contextualising the event, and by implication placing Fursa among the saints. It explains what is happening to Fursa, and pre-emptes the envisioned outcome: by living virtuously one may earn access to heaven. In §5, when he is taken up a second time, the angel's sweet chanting is contrasted with the devils' horrible shouting, demanding that he go out. At the end of this second vision, he is brought to the roof of the church and is explicitly commanded by the angel to *proprium cognoscere et resumere corpus*.⁶⁰⁵ When he sees his body, he sees it is open in the chest, suggesting this is how he is expected to enter again.⁶⁰⁶

Laisrén too does not know how he left his body, but suddenly witnesses his soul above his head: *Co n-acai a anmain opunn, co mbui fora mullach 7 ni fitir cia conair do-choid asin churp*.⁶⁰⁷ In fact, Laisrén is presented as passively witnessing these events as if he were observing a third person: *Co n-acai na ngabsat da aingel eturru 7 con-uacabsat isin aer*.⁶⁰⁸ As in VF, the action of the paragraph lies with the angels: it is 'the bright shape' (*in deilb n-etroicht*) who approaches Laisrén and invites him with the words 'Come to me!'. I assume this shape here to be Laisrén's angelic companion, who is the only character to enter into dialogue with Laisrén in this work. Again, the angels lift Laisrén up into the air: there is no mention of him undertaking any action himself. It appears the angels continue to carry him, but the action is merely implicit in the verb *tiagait* 'they go'. Up to this point he is merely a witness to the events. It is not until §9 that Laisrén can be said actively to participate:

⁶⁰⁵ §17 "identify and take back his own body".

⁶⁰⁶ §17 *uidit pectore illius corpus aperiri*.

⁶⁰⁷ §2 'He suddenly saw that his soul was above the crown of his head, and he did not know by what way it had gone out of the body.'

⁶⁰⁸ §2 'He saw that two angels took him between them, and raised him into the air.'

at this point he initiates a dialogue with the angel. It seems more than likely that this aspect of the text, too, was modelled entirely on *VF*.

Adomnán is of course taken out of the body on the Feast of John the Baptist. The text uses both *ro escomla* ‘passed out’ and *ro scar* ‘had parted, separated’ (§§10-1).⁶⁰⁹ As observed in 3.1, for the description of Paul’s vision in the prologue, the verb used is the perf. pass. 3g of *con-ocaib* ‘lifts up, raises, exalts’ and for the apostles the verb *ructha* ‘were brought’. Adomnán’s soul was borne to heaven (*rucad dochum ríchid* §10) and guided by his guardian angel, who ‘brought it with him’ (*ros-uc lais* §11). The text further tells us that the guardian angel brings the souls to the doorway of the fifth heaven (§34), that Michael brings them to the doorway of the sixth heaven (§36) and that it is brought to heaven by archangels (§38). The text here allocates different levels of heaven to different grades of angels. At the end of the vision Adomnán too is ordered to take up his body again: *at-chuala ina diaid guth ind aingil no forcongrad fuirre co ndigsed doridise cosin corp cétna asar escomla*.⁶¹⁰

In *VT* Marcus clearly indicates that Tnugdal’s soul left his body, however, there is no reference to how it exited. Tnugdal’s soul does not appear to be carried out, but simply suddenly finds himself outside it. Marcus quotes Tnugdal saying “*cum anima mea corpus exueret et illud mortuum esse cognosceret*”.⁶¹¹ Other references in the text make it clear throughout that Tnugdal must return again: *iterum ad corpus tuum debes redire* (§11).⁶¹²

Owein stands apart from the rest in that he enters the Purgatory himself, and remains in his body, as is adamantly reiterated at various points in the text, e.g. *sicut alii diem mortis nolueris expectare, sed uiuendo corpus tuum et animam simul nobis tradere*.⁶¹³ In addition, the scribe quotes Gilbert testifying that Owein *corporeis oculis se uidisse et corporaliter hec pertulisse constantissime testatur*.⁶¹⁴ He does not

⁶⁰⁹ In *Y* (the copy of *FA* integrated into *Echtra Clérech Coluim Cille*) the text reads that “their souls were separated from their bodies” and it speaks of “their guardian angels”.

⁶¹⁰ §54 ‘it heard behind it the voice of the angel, who was commanding it to come back to the same body out of which it had passed’.

⁶¹¹ *Pfeil*, p. 9. ‘As soon as my soul had shed my body and knew for sure that it was dead’. Cf. n. 548.

⁶¹² Cf. §§ 13, 17.

⁶¹³ *Easting*, p. 129, ll. 324-5. ‘you did not want to wait until the day of your death like the others, but you wished to give us at the same time your body and your soul while still alive’. *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 55.

⁶¹⁴ *Easting*, p. 150, ll. 1103-4. ‘testified very consistently that he had seen these things with his own bodily eyes and that he had endured the torments in the flesh’. *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 73.

have a guardian angel to take him from place to place, but instead we are told that demons dragged (*traxerunt*) him through the afterlife.

Lastly, in his extremely brief account of his vision, Lóchán tells us no less than three times that he was borne away, but he does not mention who bore him.⁶¹⁵ As previously observed, the Redactions and *SVA* largely omit the scene setting. *Red. XI* merely quotes 2 Cor 12:3: *uere siue in corpore siue extra corpus nescio, Deus scit*.

Out of our nine texts, only four provide conclusive evidence that the soul parted from the body. It seems to me most significant, however, that in all but one of the visions, the action of ‘going out’ is consistently a passive affair. In *VF*, *VL*, *FA*, and *Lóchán* the visionary is carried off or ‘borne away’, in most cases by an angel, though this is not specified for *Lochán*. *Red. XI* merely quotes 2 Cor 12 *raptum* (‘rapture’), but according to Himmelfarb *raptum*, in the ancient Mediterranean world, meant “being taken up to heaven at God’s initiative”.⁶¹⁶ Tnugdál and Owein are the main exceptions here: Tnugdál is not carried out, but simply suddenly finds himself outside the body, whilst Owein, of course, goes voluntarily. However, both are nonetheless shepherded through the afterworld by an angel and by devils respectively. This neatly confirms the theological position, discussed in chapter one, that the vision must be initiated by God, not by the visionary. In these texts, the disembodied soul seems to have no powers of locomotion of its own. Nor is the visionary normally assumed to travel alone. As the author of *Fís Adomnáin* writes,

(§29) Is annam trá lasin n-anmain iar comgnáis ⁊ comaittrib na colla
conna suan ⁊ cona saíre ⁊ cona sóinmige ⁊ cona sádaile athascnam co
rígsuide in Dúileman acht mani dig la eólchu aingel.⁶¹⁷

It would appear, then, that the passive nature of the experience, and separation of body and soul are, on the whole, more typical elements than a death-like state. In addition, it is especially the later visions, and *TPP* in particular, that deviate from

⁶¹⁵ e.g. *a breith d’feghadh nimhe ⁊ ifirn* ‘he was taken to see heaven and hell’; note that the text switches between third and first singular.

⁶¹⁶ Himmelfarb, ‘The Practice of Ascent’, p. 128. She argues that the two earliest writers discussing ascents, Paul and Baraies, both appear to interpret ascents in this way.

⁶¹⁷ ‘It is indeed unusual for the soul, after keeping company and dwelling together with the body, with its slumber and its ease and its prosperity and its comfort, to travel to the throne of the Creator, unless it go with angel guides’.

this pattern. This is not in itself surprising, as we have already seen that *TPP* takes a different approach to the visionary experience as a whole.

Table 15 The Going-Out of the Soul

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	Lochán	VT	TPP
Soul/Body	S	S	-	?	S	-	-	S	B
Method	by angels	by angels	-	?	by angels	-	-	-	n/a

3.2.5 The Mediator

As I have just detailed, in at least three of the visions the angel guide takes the visionary's soul out of his body. The function of carrying out the souls makes the guiding angel a psychopomp, but this is not the only—or perhaps even the main—function of the guide. We have also seen that the angel mediator plays an important role in the dialogues which lie at the heart of the scene structure. While there is usually one angel who engages in conversation with the visionary, there are on occasion two additional angels, who appear to be there to assist the first and carry the soul. Here I briefly revisit the range of functions attributed to the angelic mediator, for which I have distinguished between the functions of psychopomp, protector, guide and mediator.

In *VF* these two angels carry Fursa upwards, while the third is positioned in front. He carries a shield and a sword, symbolising his role as Fursa's protector both in word and deed. He successfully carries out a verbal battle with the Devil and his minions, wards off fiery darts aimed at Fursa, and leads him through the fire. This same angel engages in dialogue with Fursa. The angel is thus psychopomp, guide, protector and mediator. In *VL* the angel guide, as expected, fulfils an identical role, answering questions and explaining sights, whilst also guiding Laisrén through an unfamiliar landscape. The angel of *Red. VI* does not, however, appear to transport Paul or play as active a role as protector. Here the angel's function is limited to that of mediator and guide, though, on the whole their interaction does not move beyond a strict question-answer type dialogue. Only in the last paragraph can a subtle change of tone be observed when Raphael—almost literally—steps out of his role as *responsor* to ask Paul why he is crying. In *Red. XI* the angel's role is equally

effectively reduced to answering, and on one occasion posing, questions. Here he is neither psychopomp nor protector, nor even guide, though evidence for these functions is limited as the highly structured format of the text largely precludes narrative detail. In *FA* the angel is a guardian angel, functioning primarily as guide and psychopomp. The text does not lend sufficient evidence to classify this angel as a mediator. The angel of *SVA* is not mentioned in any other connection than that of delivering a message and can therefore only be identified as mediator. The function of the angel in *VT* is displayed predominantly in the context of his interaction with Tnúgdal. It is mainly twofold: he leads Tnúgdal through the punishments and he explains at every stage what everything is or to whom it applies. In addition, §2 also mentions that he is a guardian angel and that there is also a guardian devil.⁶¹⁸

In *TPP* Owein is not accompanied by an angel on his journey. Instead, the devils are his guides in a manner of speaking, dragging him from one place of torture to the next and even taking him by the hand to help him onto the bridge—though they, of course, expect him to fall off it. However, while Owein refuses, as we have seen, all manner of engagement with the devils, he frequently calls upon the Lord Jesus Christ for help. The role of the guide is therefore split up into two parts. On a physical level, it is subverted into an antagonistic role fulfilled by the devils; while on a spiritual level Jesus Christ accompanies Owein as his guide. In addition, he has the 15 men who meet him at the beginning and end of the ordeal, who appear to function as his advisors; it is thanks to them that he knows to invoke Christ's name. The split is, in my opinion, quite deliberate. At the centre of Owein's test is the injunction that one must remain constant in one's faith in order to attain salvation. Owein invokes Jesus Christ as the personification and defender of his faith while in Purgatory: the account of the tenth punishment briefly describes Owein's thoughts regarding his relationship with Christ and the help offered to him through Christ. Here Christ is referred to as the 'pious Defender' and 'his pious Guide'.⁶¹⁹ Though He is of course only present in spirit, Owein is able, by invoking His name, to procure His aid and his own release from torture. By contrast, the devils serve as a personification of unfaith and work towards his downfall by continuously tempting

⁶¹⁸ For another attestation of the concept of a guardian devil, see e.g. Volmering, '*Dá Brón Flatha Níme*'.

⁶¹⁹ *Easting*, p. 136; *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 64-5.

him to agree to their ways and turn back. Christ and the devils represent the two opposites of good and evil, or salvation and damnation; the two paths between which one must choose. The 15 advisors, I would argue, represent the clergy (or, as has been argued, more particularly, the Cistercians), who offer the soul advice as guides while on earth.⁶²⁰ In addition, the role of mediator rests almost entirely with the two archbishops who receive Owein into the place of the just. Therefore, while the functions of guide, protector and mediator are present in the narrative, they have been reinvented and distributed across a new set of characters for these functions.⁶²¹ Only the latter example (that of the archbishops), to my knowledge, finds a precedent in other material discussed here: think, for instance, of Beoán and Meldán, who fulfil a similar function. It is of interest, perhaps, that other options such as judicial roles are absent.⁶²²

Table 16 Functions of the Mediator

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	SVA	Lochán	VT	TPP
Psychopomp	•	•			•				
Guide	•	•	•		•			•	()
Protector	•	•							()
Mediator	•	•	•	•		•		•	()

3.2.6 Familiars and Other Inhabitants of the Afterworld

It is a common feature of these texts that at some point the visionary meets someone familiar to him. The term ‘familiar’ may be interpreted broadly here: the visionary does not necessarily know these characters personally. They often have a particular message or role to play in the narrative. Consequently, I have opted to create a separate category for them, beside that of mediator. Other characters that appear are, naturally, angels and devils as well as other exemplary characters. By exemplary

⁶²⁰ See further 4.1.2.

⁶²¹ I have opted to represent this with empty brackets () in the adjoining table.

⁶²² In this light, it may be of interest to note that J.R. Harrison has observed that while in apocalypses angels also have judicial (or revelatory) roles, these are not paralleled in Paul’s letters, either during the intermediate state or at the eschaton. This may be one aspect in which the visions stay closer to the historical Paul. Harrison, J.R., ‘In Quest of the Third Heaven: Paul & His Apocalyptic Imitators’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 58:1 (2004) 24-55, pp. 43-4.

characters I refer to characters which are normally unnamed and not known to the visionary, but are given individual attention in the narrative because they exemplify a certain point or argument. They are not common in the works discussed here, only occurring in *VT* and *TPP*. Angels and devils are of course a universal feature of the afterworld.

3.2.6.1 Familiars

Three of our texts contain encounters between the visionary and a familiar. First of all, the motif appears in *TPP*, where it is, however, not expanded on in any great detail. When Owein arrives at the fifth torment, he recognises some of his former companions there and they are suffering indescribable pain.⁶²³ The intent must be, as with many of the torture scenes, to frighten him into bettering himself: seeing his companions tortured there leaves no doubt about his own guilt. He himself, however, is saved by invoking the Lord. In *VF* and *VT* these characters play a far more important role.

In *VF*, Fursa is introduced to two venerable men from his own province: *duos uenerabilis uiros illius prouinciae in qua uir domini Furseus haec uidens quasi obisse credebatur*.⁶²⁴ They introduce themselves as Beoán and Meldán and are familiar to Fursa as *praesules cunctorum memoria usque ad nostra tempora celebratos*.⁶²⁵ In addition, the 9th century *Virtutes S. Fursei* states that Fursa brought relics of Beoán and Meldán with him to the continent.⁶²⁶ As discussed in 3.1.3-4, Beoán and Meldán first answer his question concerning the end of times and then proceed to lecture him concerning the vices and their remedies (§§13-4). The text does not mention any further reason why these particular characters are sent to him, but we may observe that the entire conversation is pedagogical and cast as a typical master-student (or superior-subordinate) type relationship.⁶²⁷ It would seem natural, therefore, to select characters of suitable rank and authority and who have a natural

⁶²³ Easting, 132-3; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 60.

⁶²⁴ §11 'two venerable men from the province wherein Fursa, the man of God, seeing this [vision](?), was believed to have been like one who had died'. Note that version B deviates at this point and reads ... *Furseus notus erat*... '[the province] where Fursa was born' (for *natus*).

⁶²⁵ 'prelates celebrated in the memory of all even into to our time'. I follow Carozzi in equating the term *praesules* with the rank of bishop here, given that a superior rank is required, though the narrative is not specific on this issue..

⁶²⁶ *Virtutes* §19, Krusch, 'Vita virtutesque', p. 447. Note that this copy of the *Virtutes* appears not to be the same as that translated by Groves and Rackham.

⁶²⁷ As discussed in 3.1.4, pp. 130-2.

connection to Fursa in order to mirror the normal teacher-student relationship within the monastery and within the Church at large. Since the term *praesul* indicates that Beoán and Meldán are of superior rank, and since they are from his home country they are an eminently suitable choice to cast as his teachers in heaven.⁶²⁸ Their function in the narrative is clear: they are appropriate teachers in a way that the angel is not, teaching him about the practical application of balancing a worldly with a religious life and about his duty as a *fidelis dispensator*. Another familiar, whose role is, however, limited, is the man who bequeathed his garment to Fursa, and who is later thrown at the saint from the fire.

In *VT* we have a veritable plethora of familiars who stand out conspicuously in the narrative: St. Ruadán; St. Patrick; the Irish bishops, i.e. Celestine of Armagh, Malachy of Armagh, Christianus of Louth and Nemias of Cloye; the three kings, i.e. Donnchad and Cormac Mac Carthaigh, and Conchobar Ua Briain; and the ancient heroes Fergus and Conall. As de Pontfarcy has already discussed, St. Rúadán and the three kings all have particular ties to Munster and therefore embed a secondary political motivation in the narrative. St. Rúadán was the patron saint of Lorrha, a north-Munster church, and was believed to descend from the same family, the Eóganachta, from which the Irish kings Donnchad and Cormac descended.⁶²⁹ His function in the tale is merely to establish himself as patron and to claim Tnugdal's burial rights, which may point to a personal or political connection to this monastery. Though there is nothing to prevent the suggestion that Tnugdal had a personal connection to Lorrha and the burial of nobility on monastery lands was quite common (a privilege even), the monastery does not appear to have played a significant political role in the exploits of the Clann Charthaigh in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,⁶³⁰ so that it has been suggested that it is rather Marcus who had a connection to Lorrha.⁶³¹ It is, in addition, possible that St. Ruadán's appearance is rather due to the fact that this Munster saint was also venerated in the Benedictine

⁶²⁸ Cf. p. 132.

⁶²⁹ *Tnugdal*, p. 30.

⁶³⁰ It is not mentioned in the discussions of their exploits by either de Pontfarcy or Paul MacCotter in his 'The Rise of Meic Carthaigh and the Political Geography of Desmumu', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 111 (2006) 59-76, though MacCotter also mentions that sources do not report on the northern part of the kingdom (p. 68).

⁶³¹ *Tnugdal*, pp. 82-4; Seymour, 'Tundal', p. 88.

*Schottenklöster*⁶³² and thus creates a strong connection in the text between the two localities.

The same must certainly apply to the kings too. I have already mentioned above⁶³³ that the abbot of St. James at the time of Marcus' visit was Christianus Mac Carthaigh, a relation of the kings Cormac and Donnchad, which would go a long way to explain the Mac Carthaigh bias in the story. Marcus uses these kings, however, also to illustrate the workings of the afterlife.⁶³⁴ In §16 the scene in which Tnugdál saw Conchobar and Donnchad together on friendly terms—to his great surprise, given that they were rivals in life—becomes a perfect example of God's mercy and his willingness to forgive even such violent men, if they repent before death and give alms. In addition, he portrays heaven as a place where there is, unlike on earth, no discord and where even foes live in harmony. King Cormac, who is given a prominent place in §17, and who was in reality a generous church benefactor, is here rewarded for his generosity in almsgiving, demonstrating the principle, iterated by his generous visitors, that *Labores manuum tuarum qui[a] manducabis*.⁶³⁵ But Marcus is careful to point out that the Lord is both just and merciful and thus rewards and punishes as he sees fit (§1), which is illustrated here in Cormac's temporary punishment for adultery and murder in a church sanctuary.

The same sins are, according to de Pontfarcy,⁶³⁶ attributed to Conall and Fergus, placed in the superior hell between the teeth of the beast Acheron, and the same principle would seem to apply here. While Conall and Fergus are said to have been *suis temporibus in secta ipsorum tam fideles, sicut ipsi non sunt inuenti*,⁶³⁷ they are nevertheless not forgiven for the sins of murder and adultery. Y. de Pontfarcy has suggested that Marcus thus illustrates that God is just towards both Christians and non-Christians, but I think that Marcus simultaneously draws on the topic of concern

⁶³² *Tnugdál*, p. 16.

⁶³³ p. 72.

⁶³⁴ Cf. similar comments in Watkins, C., 'Doctrine, Politics and Purgation: The Vision of Tnúthgal and the Vision of Owein at St. Patrick's Purgatory', *Journal of Medieval History* 33:3 (1996) 225-36, p. 229.

⁶³⁵ *Pfeil*, p. 45; *Tnugdál*, p. 144. Ps 127.2 'For thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands.'

⁶³⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 46. Watkins, *op. cit.*, takes over de Pontfarcy's point, but refers points to the text, which does not, in fact, mention these sins.

⁶³⁷ 'so faithful in their time to the beliefs of their own people that their likes have not been found since.'

for the fate of one's non-Christian ancestors after death.⁶³⁸ The message, here relayed, that ancestors who were non-Christian may still have some redeemable qualities is an important one historically, even if by the twelfth century we can no longer speak of a society in the process of conversion. I tentatively suggest that this might be why they are placed in the 'upper hell' instead of the lower hell and only stand as pillars holding open the mouth of the beast Acheron, rather than being subjected to torture themselves.

Lastly, the presence of St. Patrick in heaven certainly needs no explanation. The four Irish bishops, however, Celestine of Armagh, his successor Malachy, Christianus of Louth (Malachy's brother) and Nemias of Cloyne are all related to the reform movement in Ireland, of which Malachy and Celestine were both leaders.⁶³⁹ They are all contemporary figures, whom Marcus may have met himself. There are various additional hints in the text that Marcus supported the reform movement: he singles out the sin of adultery in the case of Cormac as just discussed, and reserves the severest punishment in the superior hell for ecclesiastics who fornicate. The need to reform the Irish polygamist marriage laws was an important, but also politically difficult, point of the reform movement and complaints regarding the Irish lack of compliance are also recorded in various other sources, including the *Vita S. Malachiae* by Bernard of Clairvaux, a reformer himself, whom Marcus knew and whose work he may have read.⁶⁴⁰ In *VT* Malachy is given a more prominent place than the other bishops and his accomplishments are especially stressed.

3.2.6.2 Exemplary characters

These are not too common, but one example stands out. This is the example of the pilgrim-priest (*presbyter peregrinus*) in the punishment for the proud (§5) in *VT*. The punishment features a bridge from one mountain to another, which only allows the chosen to cross. To exemplify this Tnugdál sees all who try fall off the bridge, except a priest carrying a palm and wearing a pilgrim's mantle. His virtue carries him over safely. The example simultaneously illustrates the principle, mentioned

⁶³⁸ *op. cit.*, p. 61. Cf. Watkins, 'Doctrine', p. 227, who refers to it as the 'natural law' or 'natural goodness'.

⁶³⁹ *Tnugdál*, p. 46-7.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-8, 45 and the prologue to *VT*.

elsewhere in the text, that the righteous see the punishments first so that they may praise God even more.⁶⁴¹

3.2.6.3 Angels and Devils

Tradition concerning the appearance and actions of angels and devils has a long history and is largely universal, even to this day. We thus find a high level of uniformity in the visions as well. Angels are typically bright creatures, e.g. in *VF* we are told that *Fursa claritatem eximiae lucis ex ipsis angelicis intuebatur conspectibus*,⁶⁴² but that he was unable to make out the shape of their body due to the brightness of the light.⁶⁴³ In *FA* §24 their brightness is also stressed, but we are given a rather more unusual description, which must perhaps be read as symbolic: *Secht míle aingel i ndelbaib prímhchainnel oc soillsigiud 7 oc iníorchugud inna cathrach immacuairt*.⁶⁴⁴ The angels are also often said to minister to the souls of humankind on behalf of the Lord (*VF* §11, *FA* §15, 20, 26).⁶⁴⁵ In addition, the leading angel in *VF*, who plays the role of defender, is carrying a shield (§6).⁶⁴⁶

Devils appear with opposite characteristics: dark, horrible and cruel. Again *VF* gives quite a detailed description:

(§6) Corpora autem daemoniorum, in quantum animae illius apparere poterant, plena deformitate et nigredine, collo extento, macie squalentia ac omni horrore plena, capite in similitudinem caccabi intumescence. Quando uero uolabant uel quando pugnabant, nullam corporis formam nisi horribilem et uolaticam umbram uidere poterat. ... Et facies eorum numquam potuit uidere propter horrorem tenebrarum, sicut nec sanctorum angelorum propter nimiam claritatem.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴¹ *Pfeil*, pp. 126-7; *Tnugdál*, p. 128. Cf. above, p. 154.

⁶⁴² §2 'looked upon the brightness of exalted light from the very countenance of the angels'.

⁶⁴³ §3 *Facies uero omnium, in quantum intellegere potuit, angelorum pari similitudine uidebat, quamuis propter claritatem luminis mira certitudine distinctim nihil corporeae potuit uidere formae*. 'Now the appearance of all the angels, insofar as he could understand it, was of the same likeness; but of very certainty he could see naught of their bodily form because of the brightness of the light.'

⁶⁴⁴ 'Seven thousand angels, in the shapes of chief candles, are lighting and illuminating the city on every side.'

⁶⁴⁵ *VF* §11 *ministerium dispensationis humanae*; in *FA* §26 *aingel coimitechta cacha oenanma fil inntib oc umallóit 7 timthirecht dí* 'the guardian angel of each soul which is in them is serving and ministering to it' this would appear to apply to a soul in heaven rather than on earth. Cf. §§ 15, 20.

⁶⁴⁶ The passage quotes part of Eph. 6.16 *in omnibus sumentes scutum fidei in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere*, 'In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.'

⁶⁴⁷ 'Now the bodies of the fiends, insofar as they could appear unto his soul, were filled with ugliness and blackness, with necks stretched out, filled with meagreness and filthiness and all horribleness;

The description in *VL* likewise describes blackened creatures, but gives them a fiery aspect and weapons:

(§3) Acus co n-accatar arbar aile do demnaib 7 tenntide impueib 7 tene as gach ball ro bui inntib. Teora dealba do-arfás do forsna hib demnaib: dealb rodub for alaile dib acus gai boilggi tentidi ina lamaib, 7 dealb ciardub for alaile 7 saigde teintide ina lamaib. Dealb motluch forsin tres lucht 7 find tentidi trethu amal finn n-omthainn 7 goith tentide ina llamaib.⁶⁴⁸

In *FA* the hosts of demons (*slóig demna*) have *pluic theintide ina llámaib oca mbualad ina cenn 7 siat oc sírthacra friu*.⁶⁴⁹ The devils' main function is, of course, to torture souls in their regions and there are too many examples of this to mention. Often they use tools for the purpose, such as the fiery lumps here, or the arrows and javelins in *VL*. We have already seen that self-affliction is also associated with devils, at least in *VT* above.⁶⁵⁰ In *VT* they are typically presented as fighting amongst themselves rather than against angels, as in *VF*, and they leave a stench behind when they depart.⁶⁵¹ The devils in the lower hell are described in most detail. Much like the devils in *VL* they *exarserunt sicut ignis in spinis* and in addition they are

nigri sicut carbones; oculi uero eorum ut lampades ignis ardentis. dentes etiam eorum niue candidiores. et caudas habebant ut scorpiones. ungulas quoque ferreas ualde acutas; et ut uultures habebant alas.⁶⁵²

They are also, like the Devil, presented as accusers, as discussed above (3.1.3). The Devil himself only appears in an active role in *VF*, where he is the main speaker for the opposition in the verbal battle with the angel concerning Fursa's right to pass. He is there alternatively referred to as: *aduersario; uictus Satanas (sicut contritus coluber*

their heads swelling into the likeness of a cooking pot. But when they flew or fought, he could see no shape of their bodies but a horrible and fluttering shadow. ... And he could never behold their faces because of the horror of darkness, even as the faces of the holy angels because of the too great brightness.'

⁶⁴⁸ §3. And they saw another host of demons, and fiery ... (?) around them, and fire from every limb which there was in them. Three aspects appeared to him on those demons: a very black aspect on some of them, with fiery gapped spears (?) in their hands; and a jet-black appearance on others, with arrows in their hands. There was a shaggy aspect on the third company, and fiery hair [growing] from them like the hair of a thistle, with fiery javelins in their hands.

⁶⁴⁹ §45 'fiery lumps in their hands, beating their heads, and perpetually accusing them [the people in the marshes]'.
⁶⁵⁰ See p. 150-1.

⁶⁵¹ *VT* §1.

⁶⁵² *Pfeil*, p. 35-6; *Tnugdál*, p. 136-7. 'blaze like a fire of thorns' (Ps 117, 11-2); 'black as coals, their eyes like burning torches (Rev. 9:10) their teeth were whiter than snow; they had tails like scorpions and very sharp iron nails and wings like vultures.'

caput releuasset uenenosum); *Accusator antiquus*; *Diabolus* (x2); and *Victus inimicus uiperea*.⁶⁵³ In *FA* the last dragon swallowing the wicked souls deposits it in the Devil's maws, but no further description is given.⁶⁵⁴ By contrast, the description of the Prince of Darkness in *VT* §13 is very detailed, regardless of the fact that it invokes an inexpressibility topos known as the 'iron tongues motif'.⁶⁵⁵ The Devil is enormous, black, and shaped like a human, but with a prickly tail, and with many hands, with many fingers with iron nails. He is placed under an iron griddle and tied with chains, flaring with anger, and torturing all souls he can get his hands on (§13).⁶⁵⁶

Conclusions to 3.2

As discussed in 3.1, the relationship between the visionary and the mediator forms a key element of the integral structure of the vision. Here I hope to have shown that two separate identity strategies can be identified in relation to the visionary, which ultimately alter the manner in which the text portrays its protagonist and thereby the nature of the visionary experience. Whereas in the first group (*VF*, *VL*, *Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, *FA*) the visionary is an authoritative *religiosus* relaying a divine message to the world, in the second group (*SVA*, *Lóchán*, *VT*, *TPP*) he is a lay role-model whose experience centres around personal transformation. This in turn determines the reactions attributed to the visionary and their accompanying motifs. With the exception of the *Lóchán*, which is too brief, the second group, together with *VF*, places greater emphasis on the full sensory experience of the visionary as portrayed in such reactions—but as I argued above, *VF* may be considered a mixed type. In addition, it must be taken into account that these are also simply the longer texts, so that they naturally are more likely to contain extended descriptions. The same will go some way towards explaining the presence of familiars in all three as well.

In relation to the visionary's situation, we find there is one group (i.e. *Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, *SVA*, and, for the most part, *FA*) which omit all or most information

⁶⁵³ See Appendix D.

⁶⁵⁴ This description is provided in the Old English counterpart of this part of the text, the 'Seven Heavens' section. See Volmering, N.J.B. (ed. and trans.), 'The Old English Account of the Seven Heavens', in Carey, J., et al., *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (forthcoming).

⁶⁵⁵ Discussed in *Ibid.*; Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 147; and Tristram, H.L.C., 'Stock Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Old English Prose and Poetry', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 75 (1976) 102-13, pp 107-8.

⁶⁵⁶ A similar passage is found in the Old English Account of the Seven Heavens in the Doomsday homily in CCC 41. Volmering, *op. cit.*

regarding the visionary's situation. The second group (*VF*, *VL*, *Lóchán*, *TPP*) mention all four aspects of situation, with the exception of the omission of reference to duration in *Lóchán*. In this, as well as in a tendency for the vision to occur in the evening, there appears to be consistency. We can further conclude that there is no majority of cases in which the visionary is near-death, though it can be argued that, for four out of the five cases in group two, the visionary was in a state different from normal, wakeful consciousness. In addition, one could argue that Owein's state of mind was altered, even if he was awake. The theory that the soul leaves the body during the vision is confirmed in all but one of the visions for which we have evidence, which is only for four. In addition, the action of 'going out' is consistently a passive affair, confirming the theological position, discussed in chapter one, that the vision must stem from God.⁶⁵⁷ There appears to be no meaningful distinction here that can be linked to the previously identified groupings—the case of Owein going in the body being particular to *TPP*.

The mediator is the second consistent element in the genre paradigm, with the exception again of two of the later texts: in the first (*Lóchán*) the absence of the mediator could be attributed to its brevity, though it is nonetheless a significant omission; in *TPP* the omission is the result of a (previously noted) conscious effort to alter, or even invert, the existing pattern. It is also striking that the majority of the works discussed only employ one or two of the mediator's possible functions, usually those of mediator and guide. Only *VF* and *VL* use all four.

⁶⁵⁷ Boswell has previously pointed out that the Middle Irish text *Echtra Chormaic* (recension I) contains a brief commentary on the authenticity of visions and the role of mediators in them supporting this suggestion: Stokes' edition reads *Acht adberaid na hecnaidí cach uair notaisbenta taibsi ingnad dona righflathaib anall ... conidh timtírecht diada ticedh fan samla sin, 7 conach timthírecht deamnach. Aingil immorro dos-ficed da chobair, ar is firindi aignidh dia lentais, air is timna Rechta rofoghnamh doib.* "The wise declare that when any strange apparition was revealed of old to the royal lords ... it was a divine ministration that used to come in that wise, and not a demoniacal ministration. Angels, moreover, would come and help them, for they followed Natural Truth, and they served the commandment of the Law." Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.), 'The Irish Ordeals, Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', in Windisch, E. and W. Stokes, *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch* 3:1 (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1891), pp. 183-229, pp. 202, 221-2. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, p. 122.

Table 17 Character Aspects Featured

	VF	VL	Red.VI	Red.XI	FA	SVA	Lochán	VT	TPP
2.1 Visionary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
2.2.1 Identity	R	R	RP	RP	RP	R	S	S	S
2.1.2 Reaction/effect	•	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	•	•
2.1.3 Situation	•	•			(•)		•	•	•
2.1.4 Separation of body and soul	S	S		?	S			S	B
3 Mediator	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	()
4 Familiar	•							•	•
5 Other beings	•	•		•	•		•	•	•

3.3 Form, Rhetoric, and Audience

I have argued above⁶⁵⁸ that the formal organisation of genre is a system of cues and conventions which encode meaning into the work and make it recognisable. In employing a certain generic framework the author both anticipates and manipulates the reader's expectation. Genre is thus a function of writing and part of the text's rhetoric. As discussed, its rhetorical structure includes mode and structure of narration, as well as authority, and formal features such as the exordium and peroration. To conclude this chapter, then, I now wish to examine these more formal elements, with a view to assessing their function in the communication between the author himself and his intended audience. In the exordium the author often identifies himself and takes the opportunity to set out his *causa scribendi*. Here he may also make reference to the recipient of the work and its intended audience; it also often contains a number of common *topoi*. In the peroration the author often includes his closing argument. In addition, the author may, on occasion, step outside of his narrative to comment on it. Of course, a number of our texts—primarily the shorter ones, e.g. *VL*, the Redactions and *Lóchán*—are not accompanied by an exordium or peroration and have no discernible authorial voice. Of the key texts discussed here, it is primarily the later works that have a manifest authorial presence.

3.3.1 *Causa scribendi*, Form and Function

As discussed above, many of the texts included in this study contain some form of advice or admonishment, which makes clear that some level of education and

⁶⁵⁸ Chapter 1.3.1, esp. pp. 42-3.

reproof—either directly or indirectly—of the reader is likely intended. What we can deduce from the text’s form and rhetoric is occasionally explicitly substantiated by the author himself in his exordium or peroration, or in the form of intratextual commentary. This is most pronounced in *VT*. Marcus’ *incipit* reads that the vision is written for the edification of the multitude and tells abbess Gisela that he writes for the sake of strengthening her devotion.⁶⁵⁹ Elsewhere in the text, he writes that he wishes to list a few of many torments *ad edificationem legentium*.⁶⁶⁰ Likewise, H. of Saltrey writes that he wishes “that many may find improvement” through him.⁶⁶¹ He cites Gregory the Great⁶⁶² on the dual purpose of such texts to terrify and to enflame devotion, so that he feels more confident in writing these things down for the “betterment of the simple folk”⁶⁶³ and for “all those who want to grow in love and fear of God”.⁶⁶⁴

While Marcus and H. of Saltrey have made their texts’ function explicit, in other works, such as *VF*, the *causa scribendi* is not at first glance congruent with the rhetorical argument which speaks from the hortatory sections discussed above. Nor is the text fitted with an explicit exordium or peroration, but rather with an introduction to Fursa’s early years. The immediate objective for *VF* is to provide a *uita* for Fursa. Nevertheless, his visions make up the majority of the text, and a significant part of them is taken up with advice and admonishment, so that the work may be said to serve a secondary purpose, to educate and to encourage repentance. By contrast, for the vision of Laisrén, which equally lacks an exordium and commences with the scene setting of the vision, we have to rely solely on evidence from the content, which, on the basis of the hortatory instructions given to the visionary (§10), appears to have as its main purpose to encourage repentance.

In the case of *FA* we find no overtly authorial statements outlining the *causa scribendi* along the lines of what we encountered in *VT* or *TPP*—in fact, the author

⁶⁵⁹ *Incipit uisio cuiusdam militis Hyberniensis ad edificationem multorum conscripta; and ad augmentationem uestre deuotionis. Pfeil, pp. 4, 6 (Tnugdal, pp. 111-2).*

⁶⁶⁰ *pauca de multis ad edificationem legentium uolumus recitare.* ‘we wish to list for the edification of readers a few of the many torments’. Pfeil, p. 17; Tnugdal, p. 121.

⁶⁶¹ *Licet enim utilitatem multorum per me prouenire desiderem.* Easting, p. 121, ll. 9-10; Patrick’s *Purgatory*, p. 43.

⁶⁶² See above, p. 10.

⁶⁶³ *fiducialius quod iubetis ad profectum simplicium perficiam.* Easting, p. 121, ll. 17-8; Patrick’s *Purgatory*, p. 43.

⁶⁶⁴ *cunctisque in amorem et timorem Dei proficere cupientibus.* Easting, p. 154, l. 1252; Patrick’s *Purgatory*, p. 78.

draws no attention to himself whatsoever—but instead the vision is preceded by a homiletic exordium. *FA* (in recension *BF*⁶⁶⁵) opens, in accordance with standard homiletic practice, with a pericope quoting verses five and six of Ps 146 (*Laudate Dominum*), an exhortation to praise God. Carey, in his notes, points out that the text uses a copy of the Vulgate found in Irish psalters, among which the tenth-century Irish Double Psalter of St. Ouen, and that the author appears to draw on a number of other commentators also drawn upon by the glossator of the same Double Psalter.⁶⁶⁶ The exordium's main focus is not establishing the credentials of the writer, but is in itself an exposition, in Latin and Irish, on the opening pericope. §§1-8 establish the Lord as all-powerful and all-knowing Creator, primarily by meditating on imagery from the first paragraph:

(§1) *Magnus Dominus noster et magna uirtus eius et sapientiae eius non est numerus*. Is uasal 7 is adamraigthe in Coimdiu, is mór 7 is machtnaigthe a nert 7 a chumachta. Ní fil crích ná uimir for immud a ecna nach a eólais. *Suscipiens mansuetos, Dominus humiliat autem peccatores usque ad terram*. Tócuirid in Coimdiu chuice dochum nime lucht na déirce 7 na trócaire, na cennsa 7 na coinnirle. Tairbirid immorro 7 trascaid dochum thalman 7 ifirn coimthinól n-étabach na macmallachtan.⁶⁶⁷

The exordium stresses His limitless wisdom and knowledge and great strength and power as Creator (§§1, 3, 4). Against this background, the author contrasts the qualities of the righteous, here called the meek (*mansuetos*), and the sinners (*peccatores*). The meek are those who are humble and “preserve in themselves

⁶⁶⁵ It should be noted that in comparison to *B*, *F* omits all Latin phrases after *Magnus Dominus noster* in §3 and omits §7. *YQ* omit the introduction (§§1-8) altogether, while *U* gives a summarized version of the Irish text close to that in *BO*, largely based on §1, given on this page. The last line may be compared with §1, 2, 8 in *B*: *Is uasal 7 is adamraigthe in Comdiu na ndúla 7 is mor 7 is machdaigthe a nert 7 a chumachtu. Is cennais 7 is áilgen, is trocar 7 is dearcach. Ar tócurid dochum nime chuci lucht na deirci 7 na trócaire, na censa 7 na connirle. Tairibirid im- 7 trascaid dochum n-iffird comtinól n-écraibdech n-étabach na mac mallachtan. Arfuirid derritusa 7 focraice écsamla nime dona bennachtnachaib 7 tairibirid illatu pían n-ecsamail dona maccaib báis*. (Carey translates the last line as follows: ‘He provides the secrets and the various rewards of heaven for the blessed, and hands over a multitude of various torments to the sons of death.’) Carey, Notes to §§1, 2-8. It has previously been pointed out, however, that the Latin pericope must lie behind the Irish. See above, p. 81, n. 329.

⁶⁶⁶ *op. cit.* Notes to §§ 1,1-2, 4-5, §5,1-2 (Julian of Eclanum's *Epitome* of the commentary on the Psalms by Theodore of Mopsuestia); §6,1-2, §7,1-2 (Augustine's *Enarrationes in psalmos*) and §6,2-3 (Prosper of Aquitaine, *Psalmorum a C ad CL exposition*). In addition §8.1-2 possibly draws on Jerome.

⁶⁶⁷ ‘Great is our Lord and great is his power, and his wisdom is has no number. Lofty and wonderful is the Lord, great and marvellous are his strength and his power. There is no limit nor number to the abundance of his wisdom or his knowledge. The Lord lifteth up the meek, and bringeth the wicked down even to the ground. The Lord invites to himself, to heaven, the folk of charity and mercy, of meekness and gentleness. But he abandons and casts down to earth and to hell the unprofitable assembly of the sons of malediction.’

always the likeness and image of God, and who do not go against the Father's law" (§5); they are raised up *ad imaginem Dei* (§§1, 5).⁶⁶⁸ Conversely, the sinners are those who go against God's law and are described as those whose "pitilessness and lack of meekness deprive them of an understanding of the inwardness of holy Scripture".⁶⁶⁹ The sinners are cast down to earth, "that is, to worldly wisdom, or to the senses" (§7).⁶⁷⁰ The author thus invokes a high-low contrast between heaven, associated with wisdom and obedience, and earth, associated with lack of wisdom, the worldly senses and disobedience. In this cosmological arrangement, God is the only agent: he invites and receives (*tócuirid* §1, *aurfoemaid* §5), casts (them) down (*nos trascair* §7) and reduces (*deroílid* §6). The ideal relationship between God and man is fully one-directional and hierarchical. Man ought to be passive and recipient, not *aduersans* (§5), *cotarsnae* (§6) or *écennsae* (§8). It is against this background that the author finally provides us with his *causa scribendi*, posing the rhetorical question

Masa erdalta iarum immad na fochraice nemda dona cennsaib 7 dona
coinnirclechaib, cid aile bias dona écennsaib 7 dona étrócairib acht
immad ainbthine na péine suthaine iarna ernailib écsamlaib?⁶⁷¹

The question is answered by relating Adomnán's vision. The text thus specifically seeks to explore the fate of the soul and does not appear primarily concerned with exhortation. Nothing in the *exordium* overtly suggests an interest in teaching. The first reference in the text to a possible didactic function appears in §10, where the author refers to *aní pritchaither sunn* 'that which is preached here'. This line anticipates the peroration in §§55-60, in which the account is repeatedly referred to as a *proiept* 'sermon', and the two complement each other in highlighting different functions of the text. The mirroring in the exordium and peroration of the authenticating examples of visionaries with the examples of preaching reinforces the connection between receiving the vision and preaching its contents that also speaks from the other texts. Carey identifies this framing function of the beginning and end

⁶⁶⁸ cf. §22 *Muintir romín rochennais dano cen esbaid nacha maithiusa foraib* 'A very mild, very gentle community, then, without the lack of anything good'.

⁶⁶⁹ *fora mbenann a n-étrócaire 7 a n-écennsa tuicsin n-immedónaige inna screptaire noíbe.*

⁶⁷⁰ *Is inann ón 7 cosin n-ecna ndomunda nó cosna cétfada.* This sentence, equating the sinners with the earthly senses, is unique to *B*.

⁶⁷¹ 'If, then, the abundance of the heavenly rewards is allotted to the meek and the gentle, what else will there be for those who are not meek, and for the pitiless, except abundance of the tempest of eternal punishment, according to its various kinds?'

of the text as a ‘ring structure’, belonging to a single stage in the text’s development.⁶⁷² Notably, *UQ* differ from the other manuscripts in changing *pritchaither* to *labairther* in §10 and by replacing the word *proicept* with *forcetul* ‘teaching’ or *scél* ‘tale’ elsewhere in the text. Taken together with the omission of the *exordium* this suggest a deliberate attempt to remove the more homiletic features of the text in these manuscripts.⁶⁷³ Nonetheless, while such features are softened, the text retains the examples of visionaries and of preaching, so that the ring structure remains intact.

Conversely, *SVA*, which contains little to no detail of Adomnán’s visionary experience, and contains equally little that can be construed as an overt authorial statement, is wholly occupied with exhortation, so that the author rounds off with the statement that *Is tormach n-etla 7 derci i cride cech duine do-gena amal do-ruirmissiumm*.⁶⁷⁴ The text, nevertheless, has a similar structure to *FA*. The angel’s revelation at the start of the text may be considered its opening pericope, on which the body of the text expands. It is, furthermore, followed by a peroration in which the author adduces an enumeration of examples in support of his account: in this case, to support his case that fasting and prayer are a suitable and effective means of warding off the foretold catastrophe. In *SVA*, *FA*, *TPP* and *VT* the author uses the formal features open to him to guide his audience towards a certain interpretation of the text, whether explicitly, as authorial commentary, or implicitly, in the form of a homiletic exposition.

It is perhaps rather surprising that we do not recognise much of this homiletic structure in the Redactions as well. Both *Red. VI* and *Red. XI* are rather bare, summary affairs, without supporting framework. *Red. VI* opens with a title only, while *Red. XI* takes a quote from 2 Cor 12 as its starting point—indeed, this quotation may arguably be considered an opening pericope, but the narrative proceeds directly from there with Paul’s account in the 1st person singular. The absence of a more overt homiletic framework is remarkable because these early copies were transmitted primarily amongst collections of homilies. The copy of *Red. VI* in *Le* is accompanied by a sermon anticipating the Lord’s Nativity and by *predications* on various sins. In *StG*¹ and *V*² the

⁶⁷² Carey, *op. cit.*, section III.

⁶⁷³ Carey, *op. cit.*, Note to §42.7.

⁶⁷⁴ §16 ‘It is an increase in purity and charity in the heart of every man who will do as we have related.’

text is preserved between sermons ascribed to Augustine or Ps-Augustine. In *V*² the text preceding *Red. VI* concerns the purgatorial fire.⁶⁷⁵ The sole copy of *Red. XI* is preserved in a composite manuscript containing a series of homilies ascribed to Augustine, Gregory the Great, and others, and is surrounded by a rare copy of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, a *passio* of Saint Columba of Sens, a work on the Seven Steps by which one may ascend to heaven and a Sunday Catechesis.⁶⁷⁶ Jiroušková has pointed out that all three recensions of the Redactions contain homiletic elements from the outset, though not all of the now extant copies open with a homiletic exordium.⁶⁷⁷ The lack of homiletic elements in these early Redactions reinforces her conclusion that they are transitional versions (*Übergangsfassungen*) in this respect, even though they contain the essential pattern of sequential scenes, which, through the medium of dialogue, describe and explain the relation between sins and punishments.

Jiroušková further notes that while the Redactions are thematically consistent and unambiguous (*eindeutig*), they vary significantly in their form of representation (*Darstellungsform*) and function. For instance, the branch of the Redactions circulating in Ireland and England at a later date (C) casts the text predominantly in the shape of a homily on the Sunday respite, whilst on the continent it more frequently takes the shape of a miracle text (*Mirakelerzählung*) or exemplum.⁶⁷⁸ There is a notable difference, in this regard, also between the homiletic exordia and perorations of *FA* and *SVA*, the hagiographical framework of *VF*, and the very personal, overtly authorial exordia and perorations of the later *VT* and *TPP*. The *VF* is, as a *uita*, not far removed from a miracle text, whereby the series of miracles has been replaced with a series of visions attesting to the protagonist's saintly status. By contrast, both *VT* and *TPP* purport to be written renditions of a verbal account and their accompanying exordia and perorations reflect first and foremost the author's attempt to contextualise the account, introduce it to the reader and express his motivations for writing. On the other hand, *VL* (as it stands) is an independent work. A significant factor is also that *SVA* and *FA* are both

⁶⁷⁵ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 140-42. Jiroušková notes that the sermon on the Nativity in *Le* is possibly related to one by Caesarius of Arles. In *V*² the homily following *Red. VI* is a composite homily containing material from Caesarius of Arles, Isidore and Gregory the Great. Given that Caesarius of Arles is one of the first scholars in the West known to have had access to *VSP*, further research into the connection between the dissemination of his work and the development and dissemination of the Redaction could potentially be very fruitful.

⁶⁷⁶ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 142-3; O'Sullivan, 'Redaction XI'.

⁶⁷⁷ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 374-5.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 493, 485.

predominantly written in Irish and ascribed specifically to an Irish homiletic milieu, whilst *TPP* and *VT* would certainly appear to have been written for a wider, and likely largely non-Irish, audience. In each of the works in question, however, these rhetorical elements frame the body of the vision narrative and emphasise or alter certain rhetorical and functional aspects of the text—most often the work's value as an educational text is emphasized.

Considering the functional effect of the homiletic additions on the *Darstellungsform* of the Redactions, Jiroušková has suggested that the *Visio Pauli* (or *VP*, used as an umbrella term for the text represented by the Redactions) should be considered an 'open text'. In particular, she argues that the text is polysemantic, in that the same text can be assigned to different literary types, and polyfunctional, in that one and the same text can have a different functions in different contexts.⁶⁷⁹ How this operates is perhaps clearest in Recensions B and (especially) C, in which the emphasis of the text shifts to the importance of the Sunday respite, and in which the text is regularly combined with elements from the text known as the Sunday Letter, a work which purports to be a divine letter promulgating the importance of the Sunday. This shift has consequences for the form as well as the content of the text: in a number of copies an additional closing passage is added, which lists either the punishments for those who do not respect the Sunday or the rewards for those who do, followed by all God's works and all events in salvation history which pertain to Sunday. In B and C this theme thus becomes dominant, so that the primary message of the text is no longer to warn of a immoral life, but to promote the special position of Sunday.⁶⁸⁰ The addition of homiletic elements to the text, and its combination with the Sunday Letter, thus affect a change in the function of the text. This is corroborated by the texts' placement and by their titling in the manuscripts, which, she argues, represent a means of communication between author and recipient, indicative of the author's perception of the text. Since Jiroušková equates *Gebrauchsräume* with *Gattungsfelder* and considers genre (*Gattung*) primarily functional, the text thereby effectively ought to become part of a new genre. Yet, she denies that the *Visio Pauli* itself was considered anything more than 'materia', "deren einzige Konstante ihr Inhalt ist, deren konkrete Darstellungsform und Funktion jedoch durch ihren Gebrauch bestimmt

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 372-3.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-85.

wird".⁶⁸¹ However, I would argue that her own research shows the alternative is also possible. In fact, earlier on in her discussion, Jiroušková herself notes that while the *Visio Pauli* (i.e. the Redactions) draws on other genres, it cannot be refused its own genre.⁶⁸² Like the texts under discussion in this study, the Redactions have the same consistent structure of a sequence of scenes with explanatory dialogue between Paul and an angel (here mostly Michael) and this structure remains unimpaired when the text is altered. Jiroušková has observed that both the *Visio Pauli* and the Sunday Letter are open text forms, so that they combine easily and can generate any number of combinations when doing so. However, there is a significant difference in the treatment of both texts when such a merger takes place: when the *Visio Pauli* is incorporated into the Sunday Letter, the complete form of the text is maintained; yet, when the Sunday letter is incorporated into the *Visio Pauli* only sections of it are used and merged into the host text. The same principle applies at a functional level: when part of the Sunday letter is integrated into the *Visio Pauli*, it alters it (the *Visio*) formally and functionally so that the *Visio Pauli* becomes a sermon. Conversely, when the *Visio Pauli* is integrated into the Sunday Letter, it is not the latter's function which is altered, but its own: the *Visio Pauli* becomes an exemplum within the Sunday Letter. Jiroušková concludes from this that the Sunday Letter, regardless of its variety, is a relatively stable literary genre, while the *Visio Pauli* is not, but is rather 'materia'.⁶⁸³ However, the fact that copies without additional homiletic elements survive and especially the fact that its internal structure always remains intact are, in my opinion, clear indicators that the *Visio Pauli* operates as a genre, and as a constitutive genre at that. As discussed above,⁶⁸⁴ a constitutive genre may present itself either as an independent text or as an inclusion within another. It seems to me that the difference between the two texts here is one inherent in the nature of each genre: the *Visio Pauli* operates as a largely thematic generic form which has a strong formal element, but

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.* pp. 373-4, 493.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.* p. 372. She draws on work by Klaus Grubmüller ['Gattungskonstitution im Mittelalter', in Palmer, N. and H.-J. Schiewer (eds.), *Mittelalterliche Literatur und Kunst im Spannungsfeld von Hof und Kloster: Ergebnisse der Berliner Tagung, 9-11 Oktober 1997* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 193-210] who, in a similar fashion to Frow, argues that we ought not to ask the question whether a work is a representative of a genre, but rather the question whether a work participates in the tradition of a genre (or multiple genres).

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

⁶⁸⁴ Chapter 1.3.1, p. 31.

lacks a strong rhetorical aspect⁶⁸⁵ and is therefore easily framed by genres which do have a strong rhetorical aspect. The Sunday Letter is, generically speaking, first and foremost a letter, a form which implies a strong formal and rhetorical element, but a weak, easily changeable, thematic aspect. The generic structure of the Sunday Letter thus easily allows for the incorporation of thematic elements within it without affecting its function, while its contents may be easily abstracted piecemeal, as they do not necessarily have any inherent (generic) structure in their own right.

I would argue that the structure of the visions included in this study ought to be approached in a similar fashion. *VL*, together with *Red. VI* and *XI* are examples of constitutive texts, in that they are generically homogeneous and fully independent. *VF* and *FA*, on the other hand, embed their respective vision texts into a second generic framework that modifies the overall rhetorical function of the text. In *Lóchán* and *SVA*, however, the vision text is reduced to such a degree that it lacks all generic structuring and retains only the thematic characteristics of a vision text. In these cases, the vision has become fully subservient to the dominant narrative and I think it is valid to argue that the vision text is incorporated as ‘*materia*’, to use Jiroušková’s term; as a *topos* or exemplum.

Table 18 Rhetorical Elements

	VF	VL	Red.VI	Red.XI	FA	SVA	Lóchán	VT	TPP
3.1 Exordium	•			(•)	•	•		•	•
3.2 Peroration					•	•			•
3.3 Authorial statement	•							•	•
3.4 Paraenesis	•	•						•	•
3.5 Hortatory instructions	•	•			•			•	

3.3.2 Authenticity and Authority

Another concern often addressed in the exordium is the text’s authenticity and authority. For the text to be successfully received by its intended audience, its credibility has to be established. To this end, it is commonplace for certain authenticating messages or motifs to accompany or be incorporated into a text. This

⁶⁸⁵ In particular, it lacks a strong functional modality, that is, the tone and style relating to a certain function, such as the various persuasive, pleading or rousing styles one may encounter in a homily.

can encompass empirical authorial statements regarding the source of his information, including references to witnesses; or text-internal motifs, such as attributing the contents to an authoritative person, as we have seen above.

In *FA* (as in *SVA*) the contents of the vision are ascribed to Adomnán, which in itself lends them credibility. However, in the exordium preceding the vision, the author further contextualises the authenticity of Adomnán's experience. One of the methods employed by the author, as previously discussed, is to adduce Biblical (and apocryphal) precedents. Another is his invocation of the Holy Spirit in §3. There the text purports to quote the words of the Holy Spirit as spoken by David son of Jesse, to the effect that no one is able to utter praise which is adequate to the Lord.⁶⁸⁶ The Holy Spirit is invoked as the voice of heaven on earth, as the source of illumination and prophetic inspiration. The words of David are equated with those of the Holy Spirit, and not attributed to *him*, but to the divine source of the Holy Spirit. This creates a frame for reference for all prophetic events in the text, a theme which is picked up again in §9, after the author asks the rhetorical question, in §8, what, then, there will be for those who are not meek except punishment. In §9 the author recalls that there are many among the righteous to whom a vision of the mysteries of heaven and the punishments of hell has been revealed. Set against §3, the implication is that these are all divinely inspired. Since §9 itself sets a precedent for §10, in which Adomnán is introduced as visionary, the implication here too, is that Adomnán's vision is divinely inspired, a feature that, as discussed above, is theologically important.⁶⁸⁷ In addition, on a structural level, by using quotations from the Psalms for his opening pericope, the author draws on the conventions of homiletic composition as well as the authority of the Bible.

In *VT*, on the other hand, as in *TPP*, the author adduces reports from witnesses to corroborate his story. Marcus quotes as his source both 'the testimony of many inhabitants of the city of Cork who were close to him at the time' and Tnugdal himself, writing that he learned the contents of the vision 'from the mouth of the person who saw and suffered them'.⁶⁸⁸ He, furthermore, starts off §1 (*De exitu anime*) placing the words in Tnugdal's mouth: "As soon as, he said, my soul shed

⁶⁸⁶ *Is inann ón 7 ní thic do neoch molad is imchubaid fris do dénum dó.*

⁶⁸⁷ Cf. chapter one and chapter 3.2.

⁶⁸⁸ *plurimi Corcagensis ciuitatis testantur incole, qui ei tunc aderant ; and sicut ab ipsius, qui uiderat et patiebatur, ore didicimus.* Pfeil, pp. 5-6; Tnugdal, p. 112.

[my] body...”.⁶⁸⁹ In addition, he expresses his concern about reporting the story correctly, not embellishing it. In the section on the Prince of Darkness (§13) Marcus inserts a brief comment on the impossibility of relating what is in hell, writing

Pauca tamen que ipse nobis retulit; ut reor pretermittere utile non erit. Vidit ergo ipsum principem tenebrarum ...; nec nos quod ab eius ore non didicimus presumere audemus; sed talem narrationem qualem audiuius pretermittere non debemus.⁶⁹⁰

H. of Saltrey, in his introduction to *TPP*, equally invokes earlier sources to corroborate his story. In particular, he draws heavily on Gregory the Great, engaging in a comparison of Gregory’s description on the afterlife to his own account and concluding that there is nothing in Gregory which contradicts it. He draws on both Gregory’s and Augustine’s opinion regarding the punishment of ‘immaterial spirits’ with ‘material fire’, again concluding that his own account is in line with his sources.⁶⁹¹ As mentioned previously, he adduces further testimonies, following the narrative on the Purgatory, from Gilbert and from other clergy regarding the authenticity of the narrative and of similar occurrences.⁶⁹²

In cases when the author identifies himself, here only in *VT* and *TPP*, the *exordium* often contains a number of common motifs—besides the information allowing us to identify the author—related to the issue of authenticity and authority, such as the *topoi* of foolishness, obedience and humility. In *VT*, Marcus casts himself as a humble *deuota famulus* who accedes to Gisela’s request out of obedience and charity.⁶⁹³ He also includes the *topos* of belittling his skills by describing himself as having but uneducated skills (*inerudites*)⁶⁹⁴ and borrows, as de Pontfarcy has shown,

⁶⁸⁹ *Cum, inquit, anima mea corpus exueret... Pfeil, p. 8; Tnugdal, p. 114.* Picard appears to ignore this.

⁶⁹⁰ ‘I think it is useful to include the few [torments] he related to us. For he [Tnugdal] saw the prince of darkness himself ...; as for us, we dare not surmise about something that we did not learn from his mouth, but we will report this account such as we heard it.’ *Pfeil, pp. 36-7; Tnugdal, p. 138.*

⁶⁹¹ *Easting, p. 122; Patrick’s Purgatory, pp. 44-5.*

⁶⁹² See chapter 3.1.3 above.

⁶⁹³ *deuota famulus* ‘devoted servant; *melior est enim obedientis quam quam uictime* ‘obedience is better than sacrifices’; *uestre petitiunculam uobis negare nequaquam possumus* ‘we cannot in any way deny you your modest request’ for *uires, quas imperitia, denegat, caritas ministrat* [and] *hilarem enim datorem diligit deus* ‘(for) Charity provides the strength that is denied by ignorance’ and ‘God loves a happy giver’. *Pfeil, pp. 1-2; Tnugdal, p. 109.*

⁶⁹⁴ *ego autem inops et pene latine eloquentie ignarus* ‘I am incompetent and almost ignorant of Latin eloquence’, having but *ingeniole paruitas* ‘small and meagre talent’. *Pfeil, p. 4; Tnugdal, p. 109.*

from Paul's 2 Cor 11 its foolishness *topos*.⁶⁹⁵ Likewise, H. of Saltrey confesses that he has written the text by order of his abbot, though he is evidently uneasy about the subject, in particular expressing his concern that someone might criticise him for daring to write such things.⁶⁹⁶

The humility *topos* is particularly relevant in relation to visions, as it applies not simply to the act of writing in itself, but resonates more widely with the act of disclosing or transmitting visionary accounts. The author's hesitation is perhaps not altogether surprising, given that these visionary accounts—as discussed in chapter one—sit on a rather uneasy border between the known and the unknown, and their authenticity is so easily doubted. Underlying the author's concern lest he appear vainglorious is, at least for H. of Saltrey, certainly also a concern for the veracity of the account. This is confirmed in the efforts he felt necessary to make to provide both corroborating evidence and theological background to the narrative. It is notable that H. of Saltrey's protagonist, Owein, is equally rather reticent about his experiences—significantly more so than the other visionaries in our key texts—and only relates them to Gilbert when they are alone (§21).⁶⁹⁷ He does not become a messenger to the wider public—nor is he ordered to do so—but instead it is Gilbert who eventually takes it upon himself to spread the word and defends it in front of an assembly of listeners (§22).

The application of this concept to visions of the afterlife also finds its logical source in 2 Cor, where Paul's reluctance to boast of his vision is evident not only from his choice to write in the 3rd person but also from the ensuing apology for appearing boastful:

Scio hominem in Christo ante annos quatuordecim, siue in corpore nescio, siue extra corpus nescio, Deus scit, raptum huiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum Pro huiusmodi gloriabor: pro me autem nihil gloriabor nisi in infirmitatibus meis. Nam etsi uoluero gloriari, non

⁶⁹⁵ *Vos igitur quia libenter suffertis insipientes. cum sitis ipsa sapiens. sustinete etiam hic modicum quid insipientie mee.* 'Thus you who gladly suffer fools, being yourself wise, now bear also with me a little in my foolishness.' Pfeil, p. 2; *Tnugdäl*, p. 110. Cf. 2 Cor 11:1 *Utinam sustineretis modicum quid insipientiae meae, sed et supportare me*; 2 Cor 11:19 *Libenter enim suffertis insipientes, cum sitis ipsi sapientes.*

⁶⁹⁶ *non nisi iussus tamen talia presumerem* 'I would not venture into such matters were I not under orders'. Easting, p. 121, ll.10-1, *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 43; *Si quis igitur quod scribere talia presumpserim me reprehenderit, iussioni uestre me obedientiam nouerit exhibuisse.* 'However, if someone should criticise me for having dared to write such things, let him know that I have showed obedience to your orders.' Easting, p. 154, ll. 1253-5; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 78.

⁶⁹⁷ *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 72-3; Easting, p. 150.

ero insipiens: ueritatem enim dicam: parco autem, ne quis me existimet supra id quod uidet in me, aut aliquid audit ex me. Et ne magnitudo reuelationum extollat me ...⁶⁹⁸

That this *topos* was adapted into Irish literature at an early date as well, may be demonstrated by briefly venturing outside our key texts to adduce a related, early example in which reticence regarding one's visions as a form of humility is made into a virtue. The example comes from Adomnán of Iona himself, who included accounts of visions his predecessor St. Columba received in the *Vita* he wrote in his honour. He approvingly notes that St. Columba followed Paul's example:

Hoc miraculum sanctus quamuis de aliis electis dicere uideatur, uanam utique fugiens gloriam, de se ipso tamen dixisse, per oblicum licet, nullus dubitare debet qui Paulum legit apostolum uas electionis de talibus narrantem sibi reualatis uisionibus. Non enim ita scripsit, 'scio me', sed 'scio hominem raptum usque ad tertium caelum.' Quod quamlibet de alio dicere uideatur, nemo tamen dubitat sic de propria humilitatem custodiens enarrare persona. Quem etiam et noster Columba ... sequutus est ...⁶⁹⁹

In addition, he gives a second reason for Columba's reticence with respect to his revelations.

Sed hoc etiam non neglegenter annotandum est, quod idem uir uenerabilis multa sibi a deo arcana ab aliis celata sacramenta nullo modo in hominum notitiam prodi passus sit: duabus, ut ipse aliquando paucis intimauerat fratribus, causis existentibus, hoc est ut iactantiam deuitaret, et ad semet ipsum interrogandum insustentabiles turbas de se aliqua interrogare uolentes deuulgata reuelationum fama non inuitaret.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁸ 2 Cor 12.2, 5-7: 'I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. ... For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me...'. The *topos* also appears in *Vita Antonii* §66, discussed below in chapter 4.3.1.1, p.261.

⁶⁹⁹ *Vita Columbae* I. 43, Anderson, A.O. and M.O. Anderson (ed. and trans.), *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, 2nd rev. edn (Edinburgh and London: T. Nelson, 1961; repr. Oxford, 1991), pp. 78-81. 'Although the saint, as one that shuns vainglory, seems to tell this miracle of others of the elect, yet that he has spoken of himself, albeit indirectly, should be doubted by none who has read the apostle Paul, a vessel of election, telling of such visions revealed to himself: for Paul has written, not 'I know myself', but 'I know a man caught up to the third heaven'; and although he seems to tell this of another, none doubts that he speaks in this way of his own person, preserving his humility. Likewise our Columba also has followed him ...'

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, II.7, p. 193. 'But this is also to be observed with care, that many secret mysteries, hidden from others, but imparted to him by God, were never allowed by this venerable man to reach the knowledge of men. There were for this two reasons, as he at one time told a few of the brothers;

Adomnán most likely wrote the *Vita* at the end of the seventh century, after the year 690 AD,⁷⁰¹ about forty years after the death of Fursa in Gaul and presumably some fifty-five years since Fursa's departure from Ireland. Assuming that Fursa indeed spent ten years preaching in Ireland before the crowds he was attracting forced him to leave, this is likely to be within living memory at the time of Adomnán's writing. Though it cannot be proven, it seems to me that it is not impossible that Adomnán might in fact be giving us a covert reference to Fursa's experiences here. Whatever the case may be, Adomnán certainly appears to have disproved of the kind of attention revealing one's visions might bring and of the potential for boastful behaviour that comes with it. Such concerns may well have motivated certain medieval writers, like those of *FA* and *VL*, to write anonymously, and, may equally lie behind the humility *topoi* discussed above.

3.3.3 Audience

When it comes to early works such as those examined in this study, we are so far removed from their intended audience that we are wholly dependent on clues within the text itself.⁷⁰² On occasion, we are fortunate to have statements from the author himself identifying his audience, but in this case, again, we only have such statements from the later texts.⁷⁰³ As quoted earlier in this section, Marcus' audience consists of both the abbess Gisela and the multitude. Likewise, H. of Saltrey mentions that he wrote not just for his abbot but also for the simple folk. In addition, Marcus allows some of his identity and of that of his readers shine through when he comments in-line on the punishments for the gluttons and fornicators. He writes that he 'cannot say without deep pain' that those in holy order are also punished, and, he felt compelled by charity to admit, so were even those in monastic garb.⁷⁰⁴ The fact that his prologue begins with a description of Ireland and what we know of his life

namely, to avoid boasting; and not, through widespread reports of his revelations, to invite questioning of himself by intolerable crowds of people who wished to ask some question of him.' We may compare here Isabel Moreira's similar observations regarding a preference for secrecy concerning visions in Merovingian hagiography. See Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, p. 174.

⁷⁰¹ Anderson and Anderson, *Adomnán's Life*, p. xlii.

⁷⁰² Cf. chapter 1.3.1.

⁷⁰³ In *VF*, the author shows awareness of his readers, but does not identify them. The line in question reads: *Sed quis prudentium lectorum ignorat haec etiam de immundis spiritibus ad terrorem uidentis animae fieri?* 'But who among you prudent readers does not also know that even this is done by the unclean spirits to the terror of the soul that beholdeth?' (§6).

⁷⁰⁴ *quod non sine graui dolore possum dicere and quod dicere uerebar ipsa me cogit karitas. Pfeil*, pp. 24-5; *Tnugdál*, p. 127.

further tells us that he was writing for a German audience, but the strong ties with Irish royalty in the text demonstrate his concern with Irish affairs too. The audience he had in mind almost certainly went beyond his readership in Regensburg.⁷⁰⁵

In other cases, we can only surmise from other aspects of the text what the intended audience could have been. It is not impossible, for instance, that Fursa's audience in the text might reflect the text's intended audience as well. We may recall that Beoán and Meldán (§15) instructed him to preach to all men (*omnibus*) as well as to the princes of Ireland (*Hiberniae principibus*) and to the priests of the Church (*sanctae ecclesiae sacerdotibus*). In the case of *Red. VI* and *Red. XI* the surrounding texts in the manuscripts, as mentioned above, point to a homiletic context, and in particular to a monastic context.⁷⁰⁶ Likewise, the inclusion of homilies and homiletic phrases—e.g. the appellation *karissimi*—into *TPP* almost immediately after its composition, and the homiletic aspect of *FA* (in *BF*) suggest that both these texts were perhaps, at least at one stage in their transmission, also to be read as homilies. *FA* certainly has verbal parallels with other homilies in *B*.⁷⁰⁷ The collection of homilies in *B* in particular, covering Saint's Days and Feast Days throughout the year, suggests that at least part of the manuscript may have been used for offices.⁷⁰⁸ Further clues may be derived from thematic elements in the text; I will return to the topic of audience after the next chapter.

⁷⁰⁵ *Tnugdál*, p. 90; Boyle, E., 'Stranger in a Strange Land: an Irish Monk in Germany and a Vision of the Afterlife', *Quaestio Insularis* 6 (2005) 120-34.

⁷⁰⁶ In each case, some of the surrounding homilies are addressed to *fratres karissimi*, a commonplace homiletic address to the brothers of a monastery. Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 139-42.

⁷⁰⁷ Carey, 'Fís Adomnáin', e.g. notes to §§30, 37 and 50.

⁷⁰⁸ McNamara, M., 'Irish Homilies A.D. 600-1100', in Hall, T. N. (ed.), *Via Crucis: Essays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of JE Cross* (Morgantown WV: West Virginia UP, 2002), pp. 235-84, pp. 272-3.

4. The Afterworld

In the previous chapter I have focused on the generic structuring of the *uisiones* discussed in this study and its relation to the text's rhetoric and function. This chapter discusses the thematic aspects of the core texts; that is, it concerns the eschatological principles embodied by the spatial and temporal aspects of the afterworld created in the texts. The central premise of a *uisio* is, in essence, that the journey itself is an explanation of what happens to the soul after death. Thus, the organisation of the landscapes of the *uisiones* and the punishments portrayed in them represent a physical, if symbolic, representation of the eschatological landscape within which the soul moves. This landscape is morally conceived, with each location reflecting a possible place of residence or state of being within the eschatological sphere. It represents, in effect, quite literally, a 'horizon of expectations'. The boundaries of the afterworld are often vague, but are ultimately delineated in relation to hell, and its opposite, heaven—though not all texts include a description of these—with various 'in-between' areas described in greater or lesser degrees of clarity and definition. Within this landscape, the description of a series of punishments is frequently the most detailed feature. The scenes of punishment located within this world are coupled to different types of sins or virtues, creating a tangible connection between earthly sins and heavenly rewards, as well as a catalogue of different types of sins and their estimation on the scale of good and evil. The temporal sphere of the afterworld often reflects a conflation of past, present and future, representing a divine, eschatological interpretation of the world and its inhabitants. Yet, the afterworld may distinguish between areas which are temporary or eternal; and it can make room for both a personal and a cosmological perspective.

As the author of *FA* outlined for us, according to the Biblical Christian worldview, God ultimately saves the righteous and condemns the wicked, consigning them to the Eternal Kingdom and Eternal Hell respectively.⁷⁰⁹ Yet, this

⁷⁰⁹ *FA*, exordium, discussed above. Cf. Smyth, M., 'The Origins of Purgatory Through the Lens of Seventh-Century Irish Eschatology', *Traditio* 58 (2003) 91-132, p. 94; and Graham, K., 'Patristic Views on Hell—Part I and II', *The Evangelical Quarterly* 71:3-4 (1999) 217-32, 91-310, p. 223, quoting Origen. It falls outside the scope of this chapter to include an analysis of the themes here discussed in the context of earlier and contemporary eschatological traditions in the Latin West, and I have limited myself to providing brief background sketches and references to parallels in other works only where relevant. For a detailed discussion of the various eschatological traditions lying behind the Irish traditions, I refer the reader to Daley, B.E., *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of*

division is not meant to become final until the Last Judgement, which raises the question: what happens to the soul in the 'interim'? It is this question which often lies at the core of a vision text. The dual model of the fate of the soul after death and its implications became problematic already in the time of the early Church Fathers. During the Early Christian and Late Antique periods, the conception of the state and location of the soul after death would gradually expand into the belief that there are separate places for those souls who are not completely perfect in their righteousness, nor completely wicked. For instance, Tertullian (†220 AD) believed that Hades contained two regions, one for the good and one for the bad, where souls would await the Last Judgement, and even experience some proleptic suffering.⁷¹⁰ The general consensus arrived at by such fourth and fifth century scholars as St. Hilary of Poitiers (†367 AD), St. Ambrose of Milan (†399 AD) and St. Augustine of Hippo (†430 AD), appears to have been that the Last Judgement only applied to those souls who were in the middle group; that is, the not completely good or bad, denominated by Augustine *non ualde boni*. They considered the fate of saints, or the irredeemably wicked, as sealed already: their souls were believed to go straight to heaven or hell without the need for a Last Judgement.⁷¹¹ The theory of a threefold categorisation of the soul after death that so emerges was subsequently expanded into a fourfold scheme, whereby the middle group is divided into the not-very-bad and not-very-good. This was the view expounded by Gregory the Great (†604 AD) in his *Moralia in Iob*, written and revised in ca. 590x95 AD.⁷¹² The implication of the identification of such divisions is that some sort of personal judgement must take place immediately upon death, whether automatically or by means of a judgement enacted

Patristic Eschatology (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991). See also the briefer introduction in Wright, C.D., 'Next-to-Last Things: The Interim State of Souls in Early Irish Literature', in Carey, J., *et al.* (eds.), *The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology* (forthcoming).

⁷¹⁰ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 35-37. John Collins points out that the worldview preserved in the earliest Mediterranean literature is invariably tripartite, distinguishing between heaven, earth and the netherworld, where the dead were almost invariably located (e.g. Hades), but that from the Hellenistic period onwards, the blessed dead were relocated to the heavens, so that there was no more logical place for a netherworld. (Collins, J.J. and M. Fishbane (eds.), *Death, Ecstasy and Otherworld Journeys* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995) p. xii). Elsewhere in the same work he notes that the idea that "lesser righteous people might hope for a *heavenly* afterlife first emerges clearly in the apocalyptic literature in the second century BC." (my emphasis, Collins, 'A Throne', p. 48.) Origen (†253/4 AD) also believed souls would suffer in a fire upon death. Graham, 'Patristic Views', p. 223.

⁷¹¹ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 92; Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things', esp. n. 29; Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 74-5, 98, 137-8. The terminology is from Augustine's *Enchiridion* 110.

⁷¹² Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 92; Daley, *The Hope*, p. 213.

by God or by angels.⁷¹³ Traditionally, this judgement, which determines whether the soul is good or bad, is—like the Last Judgement—believed to be based on the soul's sins and merits (or lack of them).⁷¹⁴ Capital sins were generally believed to be irredeemable. Both the threefold and fourfold view was current in Western Europe and we find both reflected in the chronotopic arrangement of our key texts.

As to the location in which the souls of this middle group were supposed to reside there was much speculation, though Martin McNamara mentions he observes a certain continuity in the post-Patristic period.⁷¹⁵ Biblical descriptions of the abode of the dead, beside the shadowy *sheol* of the Hebrews, were already varied.⁷¹⁶ As mentioned above, Tertullian believed the souls of the dead resided in Hades, but identified the place for the souls of the good as the Biblical 'bosom of Abraham'.⁷¹⁷ The Early Christian belief that souls of the (faithful) departed waited in the netherworld to be raised up to the celestial realms at Judgement Day remained visible in early medieval liturgy⁷¹⁸ (and, indeed, in vision literature). Augustine, however, like many of his contemporaries, remained quite non-specific as to the places where the middle groups might be located and simply stated the souls will be in *abditis receptaculis* 'secret storerooms'.⁷¹⁹ Equally cautious, Gregory the Great speculated that hell might be below the earth, but hesitated to speak of a place where the middling souls might go, referring only to *mansiones*.⁷²⁰ Souls of the elect, however, may also reside in an earthly or heavenly paradise.⁷²¹ Belief in an earthly

⁷¹³ As per e.g. Augustine, Caesarius of Arles, Daly, *The Hope*, pp. 137, 210. The division may be 'automatic' in that souls are automatically transferred to the correct location, or the soul may face some type of trial, such as a struggle between angels and devils or (more rarely, and mostly in slightly later texts) a personal trial before God.

⁷¹⁴ Cf. Matt. 16.27; (the Son of Man will) *reddet unicuique secundum opus eius* 'render to every man according to his works'; or Rev. 2.23: *dabo unicuique vestrum secundum opera vestra* 'I will give to every one of you according to your works' is often quoted in this respect.

⁷¹⁵ McNamara, M., 'Introduction: Some Aspects of Medieval Irish Eschatology', in McNamara, M., *et al.* (eds.), *Apocrypha Hiberniae II: Apocalyptica 2* (forthcoming), section 4.

⁷¹⁶ McNamara, M., 'Some Aspects of Early Medieval Irish Eschatology', in Ní Chatháin, P. and M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Bildung und Literatur* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), pp. 42-75, p. 44-5.

⁷¹⁷ Luke 16:22-23. So also Augustine: Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 138-9. Cf. McNamara, 'Introduction'.

⁷¹⁸ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 105.

⁷¹⁹ Daley, *The Hope*, p. 138, so also Ambrose, p. 100; Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'.

⁷²⁰ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 213-4; *Dial.* IV.25 (PL 77:356-7) *a caelesti regno quibusdam adhuc mansionibus differuntur* '[some souls of the just] are delayed in certain abodes outside of the heavenly kingdom'.

⁷²¹ Wright, J.E., *The Early History of Heaven* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) pp. 187-8, 197ff. discusses the origins of the conception of Paradise as a garden and its location on earth or in (the third) heaven. Cf. McNamara, 'Introduction'. See below, chapter 4.2.2.1.

paradise has its Biblical precedent in the garden of Eden in Gen. 2-3. The notion that paradise is a verdant garden is ancient; it can be traced back to Sumerian sources and the word itself is derived from Persian.⁷²² But paradise is also often located within heaven, most notably in the third heaven, and is also from early times recognised as the abode of the righteous.⁷²³ Various interpretations of the hereafter existed side by side in the Middle Ages, as in our key texts.

According to Marina Smyth, the earliest evidence for the existence of belief in the fourfold division of souls in Ireland comes from a text called *Liber de ordine creaturarum*, which is dated to the third quarter of the seventh century.⁷²⁴ This text describes that the middle group will only be judged at the Last Judgement, after which the souls are sent to heaven or hell according to their merits, and must wait in the interim. Its author evidently believed that the judgement is made primarily on the basis of an evaluation of good works and that those with a lack of good works will inevitably be damned—even if they did not commit any capital sins. Like some of the Fathers above, he believed that the very good and the very bad have decided their judgement already through their choices in life and go immediately to heaven and hell. However, there is no mention of a personal judgement for the middle group or of the location in which they should wait.⁷²⁵ Yet, nearly four centuries later, the Middle Irish text *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* describes a threefold division of souls at the Last Judgement—the good, the bad, and those whose goodness and badness are equal—without any mention of an interim period at all. In this text, judgement is portrayed as an individual judgement, during which the soul is accompanied by its guardian angel and guardian devil; its fate depends on whether it has more goodness in it or more badness. Those of the last group will be saved ultimately, because good

⁷²² Partin, H.B., 'Paradise', in Jones, L., *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edn (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005) pp. 6981-86, p. 6981; Wright, *The Early History*, pp. 187-8, 197ff.; Ruiten, J., van, 'Garden of Eden—Paradise' in Collins, J. J. and D. C. Harlow (eds.), *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids MI and Cambridge UK: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 658-61.

⁷²³ van Ruiten, 'Garden of Eden—Paradise', p. 660, finds this concept already in *4 Ezra* and the *Testament of Abraham*.

⁷²⁴ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 95. Cf. Díaz y Díaz, M.C. (ed. and trans.), *Liber de ordine creaturarum: Un anónimo irlandés del siglo VII*, Monografías de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela 10 (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1972); Smyth, M., 'The Seventh-Century Hiberno-Latin Treatise *Liber de ordine creaturarum*. A Translation', *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 21 (2011) 137-222.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-99. A similar position is advocated in the contemporary, and possibly Irish, hymn *Apparebit repentina* (*Ibid.*, pp. 99-101).

outweighs bad.⁷²⁶ The text, however, distinguishes multiple locations in the afterworld, namely, the paradise where Enoch and Elijah are, which is located inside the kingdom of heaven; and the Devil's community in hell, where the good and bad souls ultimately reside; as well as a location just outside the kingdom of heaven (*irbothaib*), where the souls of those who died before Christ's crucifixion reside, after Christ brought them out of hell.⁷²⁷

Further parallels could also be adduced: as noted above, variety in interpretation is the norm in this period, especially, as McNamara adds, in imaginative literary texts.⁷²⁸ Wright discusses in this light the work known as the Hiberno-Latin Reference Bible, in which he recognises "several alternative views of the location of the interim", including the earthly paradise and a place of rest (*locus requie*). He further points out that the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis* asks precisely the question where the souls reside before Judgement—a question it answers by referring to Gregory's *mansiones* mentioned above.⁷²⁹ In addition, an item in the *Catechesis Celtica*, a homily collection in a tenth-century Breton manuscript (which is known to have Irish connections),⁷³⁰ on the other hand, identifies no less than five places where the souls go after death: the *regnum celorum*, *paradisus Adae*, *infernus principalis*, *locus lucis*, and *locus calignis*.⁷³¹ Indeed, Wright too concluded his essay with the observation that there is "considerable variation in the way early Irish

⁷²⁶ Volmering, N.J.B., *Dá Brón Flatha Nime: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition, Translation and Verbal Analysis of Version LL fol. 280a-281a*, M.Phil. diss., University of Dublin, Trinity College (2009), pp. 8-9, 13-4. "Cade as trummu a maith nach a saich ind fir-se?" "What is it which is heavier, this man's goodness or badness?" ... "Nī-etarscēthar ind anim," ol Crist "ol is tréssiu mo chumachtasa regaid lim-sa." "The soul will not be divided," says Christ "since my might is stronger [than yours] he will come with me".

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 14. 7 anmand síl Adaim do neoch at-bath díb ria crochad Crist .i. do-s-fuc, ar ulc [f]ri Diabul, condad-fil i n-irbothaib flatha nime. 'the souls of Adam's offspring who died before Christ's crucifixion, that is, he brought them [out of Hell], to spite the Devil, into the environs of the Kingdom of Heaven.' The event referred to is the Harrowing of Hell. The word *irboth* is a compound with prep. *ar* 'in front of' and *both* 'hut', meaning 'waiting room, outlying area, forecourt, suburb, outskirts, environs'. Due to the primary meaning of *both* as 'hut', the term seems vaguely reminiscent of the tents in VT (see below).

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.* Other examples of contemporary views may be found there, as well as in e.g. *idem*, 'Some Aspects'; Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'; and Grogan, B., 'Eschatological Teaching in the Early Irish Church', in McNamara, M. (ed.), *Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution* (Dublin: Irish Biblical Association, 1976), pp. 46-58.

⁷²⁹ Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'.

⁷³⁰ McNamara, M., 'The Irish Affiliations of the *Catechesis Celtica*', *Celtica* 21 (1990) 291-334.

⁷³¹ McNamara, 'Introduction'; Vat. Reg. lat. 49, fol. 49vb-50ra, headed *V loca in quibus fiunt animae usque ad diem iudicii*.

narratives represent the interim state”.⁷³² One may thus expect to see similar variation in our key texts.

4.1 Spatial Representation of the Afterlife

Much of the scope and nature of our protagonists’ journeys has already been discussed in 3.1.2 above. By way of introduction to this section, then, I provide a summary of the places visited in the core texts below. As previously observed, there is inconsistency in the scope of the afterworld covered in each text, paired with an increasing tendency to elaborate on the geography and to concentrate on the unpleasant locations (and on scenes of punishment in particular). The omission of SVA in this table may be noted. Having borrowed merely the concept of the visionary experience, this text provides no description of the afterlife at all.

Table 1 Places Visited or Seen

<i>Vita Fursei</i>	(§8) <i>in aëre</i> ‘in the air’ (§11) a door or entrance (<i>ostium</i>) to <i>caeli iocunditas</i> ‘delight of heaven’ (§11) <i>supernus conuentus</i> ‘most high synod’, i.e. the <i>caeleste regno</i> ‘heavenly kingdom’
<i>Vision of Laisrén</i>	(§2) <i>isin aér</i> ‘into the air’ (§8) <i>fochlui mar amal bid beolu uama</i> ‘a great pit, as it were the mouth of a cave’ <i>erportach</i> ‘porch’ of hell’, described as <i>ind uaim</i> ‘the cave’ <i>sliab mar n-ard ndub for belaib an ifirn</i> ‘a great lofty black mountain at the mouth of hell’ <i>dorus an ifirn</i> ‘doorway of hell’, described as <i>gleann mar i n-ochtur an tslebi-sin</i> ‘a great valley on top of that mountain’ (§12) <i>ifern fadeisin .i. muir tened co n-anfad diaisneise</i> ‘hell itself; that is, a sea of fire with an indescribable storm’
<i>Red. VI</i>	(§2) <i>In primo caelo uidit arborem</i> ‘In the first heaven he saw a tree’ <i>alios locos</i> (punishments) (§10) <i>pleno caelo de pecunia multa</i> (?) (§11) <i>infernus</i> ‘hell’
<i>Red. XI</i>	(§1) <i>usque ad tertium celum</i> ‘up to the third heaven’ (§2) <i>ciuitatem magnam in celo et .xii. muros [et] Filium Dei</i> ‘city in heaven with twelve walls and the Son of God’ (§3) <i>arbores ante portas ciuitates paradisi</i> ‘trees before the gates of the city of paradise’

⁷³² Wright, ‘Next-to-Last Things’.

(§9) (*uirgines in*) *paradise* ‘(virgins in) paradise’

(§10) *locus sanctorum* ‘place of the saints’

(§11) *locus [in]iustorum* ‘place of the unjust’

Fís Adomnáin

(§11) *flaith nime* ‘the kingdom of heaven’

(§12) *cétna tír: tír na noem* ‘The first land ... is the land of the saints’

(§14) *flaith adamra* ‘a wondrous kingdom’, containing:

(§17) *maig muintire nime im rígsuide in Choimded*

fessin ‘the plain of the household of heaven, around the throne of the Lord himself’ and

(§22) *In chathair iarum ina fuil in rígsuide-sin* ‘the city in which that throne is’

(§25) *i ndinngnaib ⁊ i cnoccaib, i seiscnib ⁊ i rrotaigib* ‘in heights and in hills; in rushy places and in bogs’

(§§30-8) *dréimm na .uiii. nime* ‘ascent of the seven heavens’

(§39) *iffirn iníchtaraig co n-immud a pian ⁊ a thoidéarnam* ‘lowest hell with the multitude of its punishments and its tortures’

(§40) *cétna tír ... tír ndub ndorcha ...cen phéin* ‘the first land ...

a black dark land ...without punishment’, with a

glenn lán di theinid fris ... ocht mbiasta ann ‘valley full of fire bordering it [with] eight beasts in it’

(§41) *droichet dermár dano darsin nglenn* ‘very great bridge, across the valley’

(§43) *traíg inna péine suthaine frisin tír n-etarfuartha* ‘the strand of eternal punishment, facing the land of respite’

(§49) *tír inna pian* ‘Land of Punishments’ [referring to the foregoing]

múr teined fri tír inna pian ‘a wall of fire over against the land of punishments’

Vision of Lóchán

13. *d'feghadh nimhe ⁊ ifirn* ‘to see heaven and (also) hell’

14. *ithfírn, ait i mboi imut pian ar drongaibh ⁊ ar demnuibh* ‘hell, a place wherein were abundance of punishments on throngs of human souls and on devils’

Rochonnac tra cetre srotha an ifirn ‘So I saw the four rivers of hell’

roconnarc in Coimdhi fesin 'na rígsuidhi ‘I beheld the Lord Himself on His throne’

Visio Tnugdalis

I. Upper hell (not named in the text, includes various punishments)

§10 The road to death (*uia ducit ad mortem*) leading to:

II. Lower hell: *inferus inferior* (§10) or *infernus inferior* (§12)

with (§12) the *portae mortis* ‘Gates of Death’, described as a *fossa quadrangula quasi cisterna* ‘a pit like a square tank’, and the *portae inferi* ‘Gates of Hell’

III. Area outside a wall with a door (§14, the punishment for the not quite wicked)

IV. The *campus laetitiae* ‘plain of joy’, within the wall, described as *campum pulchrum, odoriferum, floribus insitum, lucidum et satis amenum* ‘a beautiful meadow, fragrant, planted with flowers, bright and pleasing’ (§15)

V. The wall of silver (*murus argenteus*) with no door (§18)

VI. The wall of gold (*murus de auro*), with a sort of encampment (*quasi castro*) for monks and nuns

VII. The wall of precious stones: *murum ex omnium lapidum preciosorum bene constructus* ‘strongly built from all the precious stones’, behind which are the nine orders of angels and household of God

<i>Tractatus Purgatorio Patricii</i>	<i>de Sancti</i>	<p>(§5) <i>campum ... et aulum ... in modum claustrum monachorum</i> 'field and hall ... like a monk's cloister'</p> <p>(§7) <i>uasta regio</i> 'a waste land', described as <i>terra nigra</i> and <i>regio tenebrosa</i> 'black, dark land'; the demons drag him <i>uersus fines ubi sol oritur in media estate</i> 'towards the land where the sun rises in midsummer' and to where it rises in midwinter</p> <p>(§§ 7-10) various <i>campi miseriis ac dolore pleni</i> 'plains filled with misery and pain' (and other punishments, including a bath house)</p> <p>(§14) <i>inferni introitus</i> 'entrance to hell' [but not hell], which is a <i>flammiuomus puteus</i> 'a well, belching flames'</p> <p>(§15) <i>infernum</i>, described as being located <i>sub...flammante flumine, ... latissimis et fetidis</i> 'under a burning river full of demons, very wide and stinking'</p> <p>(§15) <i>pons</i> 'a bridge', at the top of which is</p> <p>(§16) <i>murus magnus et altus in aere a terra erectus</i> 'a big wall which rose high in the air from the ground', with a door of precious stones and metals</p> <p>(§16) beyond the door: <i>requiem iustorum</i> 'place of rest of the just' or <i>terrestris paradysus</i> 'the earthly paradise'</p>
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Sequence

The sequence by which the visionary proceeds through the areas described does not necessarily follow a fixed or logical order, though it is not uncommon for the journey to take one of two routes: from unpleasant to pleasant realms or vice versa. Notable, in this respect, is the discrepancy between *VF* and *VL*, otherwise so similar. Fursa is taken up into the sky, to an area where he is able to enjoy a glimpse through the doorway of heaven (§11), and which is bounded by a fire evidently inhabited by demons and sinners (§8-9, 16). No mention is made of hell.⁷³³ The part of *VL* that now remains, on the other hand, describes, after Laisrén's ascent, a changing, mountainous landscape leading up to hell. Even from its fragmentary state it is clear that *VL* begins with a visit to realms of the unjust, as is common in many contemporary and later accounts, where *VF* only records heaven.

Red. VI is sparse regarding geographical descriptions, but Paul's tour encompasses at least the first heaven, the troublesome *caelo de pecunia multa* of §11, and ends at the entrance to hell. In *Red. XI* Paul sees the third heaven, a heavenly city with twelve walls in which the Son of God sits at his Father's right hand, paradise and its gates, the place of the saints and the place of the unjust, in addition to a number of unspecified locations of punishment of the wicked. The latter are placed after the section on the gates of paradise and before the description of the virgins in paradise, after which Paul describes the places of the just and unjust. Thus,

⁷³³ Despite this, Rackham repeatedly refers to Fursa's location as hell (§§6, 8, 16).

while Paul in *Red. VI* moves in a rather straightforward fashion from the first heaven, to the punishments, and then to hell, the sequence in *Red. XI* is far less linear. It is, in fact, divided into four parts instead of three: Paul sees first the heavenly city and the gates of paradise, followed by the punishments in the river of fire; then again paradise and the place of the saints and finally the place of the unjust.⁷³⁴ What these two texts have in common, is of course that they ultimately derive their sequence from *VSP*, in which Paul visits the land of the saints and the city of Jesus before he visits hell. However, *Red. XI* is unusual in that it alters the original three-fold pattern to a four-fold one.

In *FA* we find a similar sequence to that in *Red. VI*, though the text is obviously much more complex. First it describes the heavenly realms, that is, the kingdom of heaven, which includes a land of the saints (*tír na noem*) as well as the plain of the household of heaven (*maig muintire nime*), which holds the heavenly city with the Lord's throne and his heavenly host. Outside this city is a hilly, bog-like landscape. The text then describes the soul's ascent through the seven heavens, followed by the unpleasant realms. These include, among others, a land of punishments, a dark, black land without punishments, and a (not otherwise described) land of respite. Though *FA* is made up out of three main sections—the heavenly city and its surrounding areas, the seven heavens, and hell and its punishments—and the sequence is not perfectly joined,⁷³⁵ the text is in fact quite well balanced, with the first and third section nearly equal in size.⁷³⁶ The text is also quite straightforwardly linear; the first half of the text concerns the heavenly realms, the second hell-like realms, with the seven heavens sections functioning as a transitional piece. The judgement scene in the seven heavens section (§37), after which the focus turns to descriptions of hell, is placed only just past the narrative's halfway point. *FA* thus follows a similar sequence to *VSP* and it has been argued that for this reason, and because of other parallels in descriptive details in the text,⁷³⁷ that

⁷³⁴ Cf. Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 378.

⁷³⁵ See further below, as well as the review in Volmering, 'De Structuur'.

⁷³⁶ In fact, a rough word count—as per Office Word—reveals the two sections each to be ca. 1800 words.

⁷³⁷ E.g. the mention of Enoch and Elijah and the description of the land of the saints. See further below.

the author of *FA* must have been familiar with a version of *VSP* as well as with one or more of the Redactions.⁷³⁸

We find the opposite sequence in *Lóchán*, *VT* and *TPP*. *Lóchán* tells his brothers that he was taken to hell, where he saw an abundance of punishments as well as the four rivers of hell and a multi-headed monster, and afterwards to heaven, where he saw the Lord himself, and Michael in the form of a bird. *Tnugdál*, likewise, is taken to hell first: he proceeds down a descending path from the upper into the lower hell, and upwards again to various increasingly pleasant abodes, until he reaches the household of God. Though not all of these areas are given names, the different stages of his journey are carefully demarcated by gates, doors and walls, so that, as de Pontfarcy has demonstrated, the journey can be divided into seven stages.⁷³⁹ Lastly, while *TPP* contains very few named places as such and is not as neatly partitioned off as *VT*, *Owein* likewise moves through a series of punishments towards hell and from there ascends towards paradise. The sequence is schematically represented in the following table, which differentiates between heaven, hell, places of the just and places of the unjust.⁷⁴⁰ While such a schematic representation does not do the texts' complexity justice, it highlights the change to a hell-to-heaven sequence in the visions as well as, in particular, the change between *VF* and *VL*.

Table 20 Sequence

VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	Lóchán	VT	TPP
heaven	unjust hell	heaven just unjust hell	heaven unjust just unjust	just heaven seven heavens hell	hell heaven	unjust hell just heaven	unjust hell just

⁷³⁸ Carey, *op. cit.*; Dumville, 'Towards'.

⁷³⁹ See her schematic representation, *Tnugdál*, p. 50. On p. 59, indeed, she divides the journey into six stages, but I believe that a seven-stage division is more accurate, since there is a clear distinction, by means of a wall and by ascent, between the area beyond the gold wall and that beyond the wall of precious stones. By contrast, Boswell seems to have considered that *VT* has no "definite scheme of the Otherworld", *An Irish Precursor*, p. 225.

⁷⁴⁰ In the table in the conclusion this is abbreviated as heaven (C), hell (H), places of the just (J) and of the unjust (I).

4.2 Heaven, Hell and Hierarchy

Notwithstanding the emphasis on punishment in these visions, the possibilities within the landscape of the afterlife are delimited by its eschatological extremities, that is, by heaven and hell. However, in an increasingly complex landscape of ‘interim’ possibilities, it becomes correspondingly more difficult to define what ‘hell’ encompasses. Is it a deep pit or a fiery sea? Is there more than one hell? And who resides there and when? Equally, given the Biblical belief in a multiplicity of heavens—usually seven—and references to the place of the just as the ‘bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’ or ‘paradise’, one might ask what differentiates these heavenly localities from each other, and who may enter there. This section looks, first, at those areas which are designated as ‘hell’ and ‘heaven’, their attributions (or, for that matter, omission), and subdivisions; and, second, at the means through which such levels of subdivision or hierarchy—wherever these may be established—are represented. As we shall see, the traditional conception, mentioned above, that the perfectly wicked invariably go to hell and the perfectly righteous to heaven is largely recognisable in the texts discussed here, though, beyond the expected stock motifs, each text gives its own independent interpretation of the geographical and eschatological arrangement of heaven and hell and their envisaged inhabitants. My analysis shows, however, that, notwithstanding such variety, many of the texts here discussed explicitly recognise graded levels of access which stand between the soul and its ultimate goal—heaven; and which become increasingly complex as we move forward in time.

4.2.1 Hell

There are two texts which we may leave aside in this section, as any mention of hell is conspicuously absent: these are *VF*⁷⁴¹ and *Red. XI*. Next, there are texts which explicitly distinguish hell from other ‘unpleasant’ regions in the afterworld, namely *FA*, *VL*, *TPP* and *VT*, though in the last of these the portrayal is somewhat more complex. By contrast, in *Lóchán*, brief as it is, no non-infernal unpleasant abodes are mentioned, but its conception of hell seems close to that in *FA*. Lastly, there remains one text in which the definition of hell remains largely ambiguous: *Red. VI*. In addition, we may distinguish between those texts in which ‘hell’ is perceived as an

⁷⁴¹ Despite this, Rackham repeatedly refers to Fursa’s location as hell (§§6, 8, 16).

area containing punishments (*VL*, *FA*, *Lóchán*, *VT*) and those in which it is not so perceived or in which this is not mentioned explicitly (*Red. VI* and *TPP*).

In *VL*, Laisrén moves through a valley, into a cave and to a mountain with another valley on top of it—a rather complex landscape in itself—but it is not until he reaches this last valley, which is described as *dorus an ifirn* (‘the doorway of hell’), that we are informed about *ifern fadeisin* ‘hell itself’ (§12). Hell is then described as ‘a sea of fire with an indescribable storm, and with indescribable waves upon it’; this sea is full of burning souls, wailing and lamenting (§12). It is difficult to imagine exactly what the complete geography of this landscape was intended to be like, but it is nonetheless clear that this hell is identified as different from the areas Laisrén has previously traversed. Unfortunately, our text breaks off shortly after the description of hell begins, so that all we can say about it is that would appear to have contained a series of punishments, concerning which the angel gave explanations. Aside from the physical distinction between the two landscapes—the first consisting of mountains and valleys; the second of a fiery seascape—the landscape of hell is also experienced differently by the souls in it. The souls in the first landscape are lamenting, but do not appear to be suffering; the souls in the second landscape are lamenting and suffering tortures (§§12-3). In addition, while, as we will see below, the souls in the first landscape may yet be able to leave there, the souls in hell are suffering *cen cumsanad tria bithu* ‘ceaselessly forever’ (§12). Given this contrast, I think it important to note the choice of *cumsanad*, ‘ceasing, rest’, which, when referring to hell, and certainly combined with the phrase *tria bithu* often means ‘eternal’. Consequently, I think this phrase could be taken to indicate not merely that the suffering is unending, but that the position of the souls in hell is infinite and irremediable.⁷⁴²

The *TPP* equally does not refer to the valleys of punishment as hell, which is set apart completely from these areas. Owein is made to believe he has reached the entrance to hell when he reaches a *flammiuomus puteus* ‘a well belching flames’ (§14). A stinking flame shoots up from it, hurling men and women up in the air like

⁷⁴² It seems doubtful whether the phrase was intended to be read in the context of the tradition of respite discussed in relation to *VSP* and the Redactions, but this cannot be ruled out.

sparks of fire, though they fall right back in.⁷⁴³ However, he is subsequently told that he was tricked and informed that hell is located under a burning river full of demons, very wide and stinking (§15). It would seem that the author thought of hell—or at least of the well—as an area containing punishment, as Owein feels an increasingly intense pain as he goes deeper into the well. However, we are not given any information concerning the ‘actual’ hell under the river. H. of Saltrey anticipates the well in §14 in his introduction by recording the belief that hell is under or in a hole in the earth, but he does not mention the river there.⁷⁴⁴ The well here is evidently modelled on *VSP* §41, with which it shares the idea that those who enter this well will perish forever.⁷⁴⁵ The sinners located in the well in *TPP* are the only group of sinners that will not ultimately be purified and saved.⁷⁴⁶

The situation is somewhat more complex in *VT*. Since de Pontfarcy’s study of the structure of the text, the terms upper and lower hell have become more or less household terms. Yet only the term *infernus inferior*⁷⁴⁷ has a basis in the text, while the preceding areas are only referred to with the adjective *superius*; that is, they are not referred to as *infernus* or *inferni*. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a lower hell ought to be matched by an upper hell, but this is not explicit. When the text switches to the descent into the lower hell (§10), the angel reveals to Tnugdál that: “all the people you have seen before are expecting the judgement of God, but from here on those who are in the lower parts have already been judged. For, you have not yet reached the lower hell.”⁷⁴⁸ The distinction between the two areas is thus twofold: first—as discussed above—they are separated by a descent; second, they are differentiated by the state of judgement of the souls in them, as in *TPP*.

⁷⁴³ Easting, p. 134, ll. 509-14 *Et ecce uidit ante se flammam teterrimam et sulphureo fetore putentem quasi de puteo quodam ascendere et quasi homines nudos et igneos utriusque sexus et etatis diuerse sicut scintillas ignis sursum in aere iactari, qui et, flammarium ui deficient, reciderunt iterum in puteo et igne.*; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 63.

⁷⁴⁴ Easting, p. 122, ll. 51-3 *Et quidem infernus subtus terram uel infra terre concauitatem quasi carcer et ergastulum tenebrarum a quibusdam esse creditur*; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 45.

⁷⁴⁵ Easting, p. 135, ll. 518-9 *Quo si semel intraueris, in eternum et anima et corpore peribis.*; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 63; Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, pp. 154-5, *numquam comemoracio eius fit in conspectus patris et filii et spiritu sancti et sanctorum angelorum (P)*.

⁷⁴⁶ Easting, p. 144, ll. 863-4 *preter eos qui infra os putei infernalis detinentur*; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 69.

⁷⁴⁷ Cf. Ps 85:13 *et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori* ‘and thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower hell’.

⁷⁴⁸ *Omnes quos uidisti superius iudicium dei expectant, sed isti qui adhuc sunt in inferioribus iam iudicati. adhuc namque non peruenisti ad inferos inferiores.* Pfeil, p. 33; Tnugdál, p. 134.

The lower hell is described *in extenso*. We have already observed the horrible effect it has on Tnugdál.⁷⁴⁹ Having adjusted somewhat to his environment, he, too, finds himself in front of a stinking, flaming pit (*fossa* §12). From it, souls are tossed up into the air like ashes, only to fall right down again.⁷⁵⁰ The demons there threaten Tnugdál, telling him that he has arrived at the gates of death and that, once he passes through them, he will be introduced to everlasting death (*mors perpetua*). In addition, they inform him that souls in the lower hell will no longer be able to hope for any aid or mercy, nor will they ever be able to exit again.⁷⁵¹ The lower hell of *VT* is also the place of the Devil, here called the Prince of Darkness. He lies prostrate, held down with chains, and is described with a *gradatio* motif enumerating his hands, fingers, palms and nails.⁷⁵² From the description it is clear that the dragon is the source of the sparks flying up from the pit. Other characters said to reside there are angels of darkness, servants of Satan, the sons of Adam who did not hope in God's forgiveness and did not believe in God, those who commit acts of denial, and those prelates who misused their power to rule⁷⁵³—that is, a selection of the worst offenders. They all end up there after suffering the minor punishments.⁷⁵⁴ That those who commit major sins are already judged and assigned to the household of the devil himself is in keeping with the belief, mentioned above, that the irredeemably wicked are judged already by their sins.

In *FA*, on the other hand, the term *ifern* is used to cover a wider range of areas, most of which contain punishments. At the start of the description of hell, the text specifies that Adomnán is taken to see the *iffirn iníchtaraig* 'lowest hell', *co n-immud a pian ⁊ a thoidéanam* 'with the multitude of its punishments and its tortures'

⁷⁴⁹ Chapter 3.2.2 above.

⁷⁵⁰ *uidit fossam quadrangulam quasi cisternam. qui puteus putridam flamme et fumi emittit columpnam; que columpna usque ad celos extendebatur. Erat etiam in ipsa flamma maxima multitudo animarum simul et demonum. que ascendebant more fauillarum cum flamma ascendentium et ad nichilum redacto fumo cum demonibus iterum cadebant in fornacem usque ad profundum.* Pfeil, p. 34; Tnugdál, p. 136.

⁷⁵¹ Pfeil, pp. 35-6, 38-9; Tnugdál, pp. 136-7, 139.

⁷⁵² Similar descriptions occur in the *Fifteen Token of Doomsday* and the *Tidings of Doomsday* (Tnugdál, pp. 74-5). This 'monster of hell' motif generally presents itself in a numerical *gradatio* pattern in Insular texts and was very likely inspired by the dragon Parthemon. (Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 165). The motif is also found in recensions A and B of the Redactions of the *Visio Pauli*: Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 166, 172, 175. Satan is also bound in chains in the Old English homily containing the translation of the seven heavens section also found in *FA*. See Volmering, 'The Old English Seven Heavens'.

⁷⁵³ Cf. the admonitions regarding kings and prelates in *VF* §§13-4.

⁷⁵⁴ Pfeil, pp. 38-9; Tnugdál, p. 139.

(§39). All of the areas subsequently described appear to fall within this ‘lowest hell’.⁷⁵⁵ At the end of the description of punishments, the land is referred to as the *tír inna pían* ‘land of punishments’ (§49). The landscape itself, however, appears to be varied and consists of a dark, black, empty land in which there are no punishments (§40); a valley of fire (§§40-1)—which borders on the former—with a bridge over it (§ 41-2); a ‘strand of eternal punishment’, facing a ‘land of respite’ (§43); and a number of locations in which souls are punished situated in fiery seas, jet-black marshes, or landscapes of black stones and black water (§§44-8). A separate description of geographical features is given in §51-2, which appears to reflect an abode for devils only. In §§43-4, 46 the text speaks of a sea of fire which ebbs over souls (§43) or in which they are immersed up to their chin (§44), but it is unclear whether this is a reinterpretation of the valley of fire or a separate part of the landscape. §46 describes islands within the sea of fire. We are told that those who are in those punishments ‘dwell with the household of the Devil’ (*i comaittreib muintire diabuil*), who is set over them as lord (§50).⁷⁵⁶ Each of these areas is differentiated from the others both by its geographical characteristics and by the status of the souls which inhabit it.

Adomnán first arrives in the black, dark land mentioned in §40. It seems uncertain what the function of this land was intended to be, but both Wright and Carey equate this land with the land mentioned in §43, on account of its not containing any punishments. §43 reads *tír n-etarfuatha* in *BF* but *tír n-etordorcha* in *LUQ*. Given the superiority of *B* over *LU*,⁷⁵⁷ I take the former to be the original reading. In an earlier translation Carey rendered it as a ‘cooler country’,⁷⁵⁸ according to the primary sense of the word *etar(f)úarad*,⁷⁵⁹ but he has now adopted Wright’s recent suggestion—which is no doubt correct—that the *tír n-etarfuatha* ought to be

⁷⁵⁵ The term is used in the exordium (§§1, 9, (9*Q*), 10) and in §§37, 38, 39, 47, 56, (57*UQ*), 61, (62*Q*). In the section on the punishments the term *ifern* is infrequent, but in §47 the term is used again to describe the soul being hurled down *i fudomain iffirm* ‘into the depth of hell’. MS *Q* notably adds the term *ifern* on three occasions where *BF* do not record it, seemingly placing a greater emphasis on hell.

⁷⁵⁶ Cf. §38 *frecnarcus muintire diabuil 7 ifirm* ‘the household of the Devil and of hell’; where *BO* read *muinntire ifirm* ‘of the household of hell’, *UQ* *diabail* ‘of the Devil’.

⁷⁵⁷ Carey, ‘Fís Adomnáin’; Mac Eoin, G., ‘Observations on some Middle Irish Homilies’, in Ní Chatháin, P. and M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Bildung und Literatur = Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), pp. 195-211.

⁷⁵⁸ Carey, *King of Mysteries*, p. 270.

⁷⁵⁹ *DIL*, s.v. *etarúarad*: ‘cooling; refreshing’.

read as a translation of Latin *refrigerium* ‘refreshing’.⁷⁶⁰ Wright’s reasons for equating the two areas in §40 and §43 are twofold: on the one side, they are inspired by his interpretation of its connection to the bridge scene described in between, in §§41-2; on the other, by the observations that the land in §40 is otherwise functionless and that the land is said to be without punishments, not without souls. However, the text specifies that this land is *folomm* ‘empty, unoccupied’.⁷⁶¹ In addition, while his assumption that the souls are attempting to get to the land of respite by crossing the bridge is no doubt accurate, by equating the two areas, we are left without an area to start the crossing from. I would suggest following the structuring of the text in this case and reading §§40-3 as a single unit within the narrative, outlining the place from which souls attempt to cross the bridge, in order to reach the land of respite on the *other* side.⁷⁶² Read in this manner, we may suppose that the soul, upon arrival, finds itself in the empty, scorched land, and closest to the ‘strand of eternal punishment’ (the next item described, §43), which must form the border between the scorched land and the valley of fire, and which is said to lie *anall* ‘opposite, on the other side of’ the land of respite. This also makes sense in relation to the significance of the bridge scene (see below in 4.3.1.2): the bridge is intended as a testing or winnowing mechanism to determine the souls’ guilt and final destination. It is fitting, therefore, that the area from which they start out is rather indeterminate. The land of respite, on the other side, can only be reached by those who zealously follow the Lord, but this group is sub-divided in two: i) virgins, penitents and martyrs, who cross easily; and ii) those who did not come to Christianity voluntarily, but embraced it afterwards—for them the road is narrow and perilous at first, but broad at last. I know of no precedent for identifying this latter group so specifically, which may indicate it concerns a matter of special interest to the author.⁷⁶³ However, in broad terms, it clearly represents the imperfect, but

⁷⁶⁰ Wright, ‘Next-to-Last-Things’, notes that usage elsewhere in *B* confirms the interpretation of respite and refers to the gloss accompanying the *Lorica of Laidcenn* in the same manuscript, identifying *refrigerium* as *etarfuairad*. In addition, in §50 the same word (*etarúairad*) is used to describe temporary respite (see below).

⁷⁶¹ *DIL*, s.v. *folam*.

⁷⁶² Though it has been argued by Dumville (‘Towards’) and myself (‘Struktur’) that we ought not necessarily to look for a coherent geographical map in the narrative, which is clearly a pastiche of various sources, I do think these paragraphs make a logical unit, both structurally and semantically.

⁷⁶³ We may perhaps compare this instance with the vision of Sunniulf, in Gregory of Tours’ *HF* IV.33, in which the group unable to cross the bridge is described as ‘anyone who is discovered to have been lacking in authority’; this is a reference to a fault in the protagonist.

ultimately good, souls. Those who do not make it across the bridge are those who wilfully ignore the word of God.

The following set of scenes, then, appears to turn to those who fall off the bridge: by analogy this must include both the completely wicked and the mostly wicked. However, there is one other group the author felt the need to address: those whose good and evil are of equal weight (*in lucht dianid comthrom a maith 7 a n-olc*). They are on the strand of eternal punishment, but will ultimately be saved, on Doomsday.⁷⁶⁴ As Dumville has pointed out previously, this is the first of a section which betrays “conscious artistry” in that it is composed of two sets of three scenes: one in which sinners are saved, followed by two in which they are not.⁷⁶⁵ Consequently, §§44-5 describe two groups of sinners partially submerged; one group up to the chin, in fire; and the other up to the girdle, in marsh-land. The following set begins with a group of sinners who are not tortured at all, but who are on islands in the sea of fire, protected by silver walls made from their garments and alms.⁷⁶⁶ They too will be saved after Doomsday. The next two paragraphs again describe groups of sinners undergoing elaborate and horrific tortures. The sum of these scenes is thus that a portion of the sinners is punished severely in hell (for an indefinite time), another portion is punished much less severely and will be saved at Doomsday, and a third portion (those who cross the bridge) is merely passing through to the land of respite.

The closing two paragraphs (§§49-50) of this section further clarify that *all* those who are in those punishments are only there until the Day of Judgement, describing the souls as *oc tróige 7 oc neiméile frisin Coimdid im thorrachtain chucu laithe mbrátha co lluath dús in fuigébtas nach n-etaruarad isind fuigiull*.⁷⁶⁷ Those who do not gain respite will evidently be moved to the *múr teined* (‘wall of fire’) on the far side of the land of punishments, which is seven times as horrible (§49).⁷⁶⁸ In the meantime, the souls are without any *cumsanad* ‘rest’, except for three hours on

⁷⁶⁴ This notion is worked out in greater detail in *Dá Brón Flatha Nime*, a spin-off of *FA*, where we find the Judgement scene in which the soul whose good and evil is equally heavy is saved by Christ. (See Volmering, ‘*Dá Brón Flatha Nime*’.)

⁷⁶⁵ Dumville, ‘Towards’, p. 72.

⁷⁶⁶ §46 *Múir airgidide impu dia n-éaigib 7 dia n-almsanaib*.

⁷⁶⁷ §50, ‘pleading with the Lord that the Day of Judgement come to them swiftly so that they may know whether they will obtain any respite at the Judgement.’

⁷⁶⁸ The souls will apparently be *in* the wall. This is paralleled in *VSP* §37 and in §19 of the Redactions (as per Jiroušková, see p. 234). Seymour (*Irish Visions*, p. 33) and Becker (*A Contribution*, p. 77) point to versions with an iron wall full of souls. (Note that this paragraph is omitted from the abbreviated version in *Echtra Chléirech Coluim Chille*.)

Sunday.⁷⁶⁹ It seems to me that the *etarúarad* (respite) referred to here is equivalent to that of the land of respite above (§43), where the same term is used to refer to the place of the good souls in the period before Judgement, indicating a state separate from any form of punishment, and that it is implied here that the ‘not-very-good’ who receive punishments until Doomsday may, at that time, yet be saved and given ‘respite’. I would thus suggest that it is to be distinguished from the temporary rest (for which the author uses *cumsanad*) and I would also call into question the common assumption (most recently in Wright) that the ‘land of respite’ is part of the territory referred to as *tír inna pían* or *ifern*. The land of respite is not, in fact, described itself and only ever mentioned as a destination the souls are trying to reach—not as a destination in which they are at present.⁷⁷⁰ In my opinion, it is only in *LUQ*, where the text reads *tír n-etordorcha*, that the equation between the land of §41 and §43 is plausible, but this reading appears to be secondary, possibly due precisely to a scribe conflating the two areas and subsequently questioning the reference to a *refrigerium* in hell. Note, however, that the reading *etordorcha* implies the less satisfactory interpretation that the good (virgins, penitents, martyrs) are trying to reach a black, scorched land (rather than a pleasant land), which then requires the explanation, as per Wright, that the land must be *relatively* cooler.

The image of hell painted in *FA*, then, shows a landscape consisting of an amalgam of unpleasant areas containing souls of varying degrees of wickedness, which are punished to various degrees (assuming that the islands in the fiery sea are considered a form of punishment). While only some of them will be saved on Doomsday, for all of them, this hell is temporary, as the wicked will go to the wall of fire on Doomsday. It would appear that §51-2 describe an area behind (?) this wall. This includes thorny mountains, bare, burnt plains, monster-haunted lakes, stormy seas, a harsh surface and four rivers and is where the demons dwell after punishing the souls. In effect, then, the text implicitly distinguishes between a temporary and a

⁷⁶⁹ This is a motif based on *VSP* §44, where, however, the sinners gain a full Sunday (day and night) of respite; in the Redactions, §34g (see Jiroušková, p. 267-8), they gain an even longer day, from noon on Saturday until the first hour of Monday (pp. 268, 367). The three-hour respite is also found in the Irish *Transitus Mariae* (for this text see above n. 378).

⁷⁷⁰ This appears to be congruent with interpretations of the *refrigerium* elsewhere in Irish Latin: Carey (note to §43,2), referring to the *Liber de ordine creaturarum* and Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae* III.10, points out that “In Irish Latin, *refrigerium* and related words could refer to the bliss of heaven itself”. On the other hand, there is also a homily in *LB* which uses the term *etarúarad* for relief from punishments (Atkinson, *Passion and Homilies*, hom. VII, pp. 151ff. and 401ff.).

permanent ‘hell’. Though the text refers to a ‘lowest’ hell on one occasion (§39), I am not convinced this reference ought to be taken as anything other than a translation of the Biblical *infernus inferior*.⁷⁷¹ One could plausibly interpret the text’s distinction between those who will be saved and those who (presumably) will not as a reflection of the *mali ualde* and the *mali non ualde*, but it seems to me this is unhelpful as the text is more subtle than that, and less concerned with fixing categories than with providing examples of the possible fate of souls. In addition, as we shall see below, these are not the only distinctions the text makes. *FA* differs from other texts discussed heretofore, in that it describes a hell which is undeniably temporary as well as an area beside it which appears to function as a permanent hell, which, however, is only open to souls after Doomsday. The hell in *FA* further encompasses both souls that will ultimately be saved and those who will not. The perception of *ifern* as encompassing a wider range of possibilities than the Latin equivalent in our other texts is consistent with the findings reported by Brian Grogan in his study on eschatological teaching in the Irish church.⁷⁷²

In Lóchán’s account of the afterlife he mentions only heaven and hell, but, appears to conceive of hell in a way not very different from *FA*. Lóchán states that hell is a place of *imut pian ar drongaibh 7 ar demnuibh* ‘abundance of punishments on throngs of human souls and on devils’. In it, Lóchán also saw the four rivers of hell, as well as a monster of hell. There is no indication, however, as to whether this hell is permanent or temporary.

In conclusion, we have one text in which the concept of hell is somewhat problematic. In *Red. VI* the word for hell is used only at the end of the narrative, when Paul learns that his family is burning in hell (*in infernum usurantur*, §11). However, we are told tantalisingly little about this hell and whether it is perceived to be different from the preceding part of Paul’s journey. The next line merely states that Paul, weeping, *ieictauit se ... super inferno* ‘threw himself upon the hell’,⁷⁷³ suggesting its entrance was below him. The episode is most likely ultimately derived from §41 of *VSP*, in which Paul is shown a well (*puteus*) sealed off with seven seals,

⁷⁷¹ Cf. Ps 85:13 *et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori* ‘and thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower hell’.

⁷⁷² Grogan, ‘Eschatological Teaching’.

⁷⁷³ It is possible also that *infero* was intended here, but I see no need to amend. The manuscript reading is arguably supported by the evidence of Recension A (see the next note).

and §43, in which he laments what he sees, but the present episode barely recalls the hypothetical source.⁷⁷⁴ Even more unusual is that Paul appears to be able to procure the release of his next of kin to the ninth degree from hell. Silverstein was of the opinion that the punishments Paul witnesses here reflect ‘purgatory’ and that only the location of Paul’s parents is ‘hell’.⁷⁷⁵ Carozzi believes this is probable as the term *infernus* is only used in that scene.⁷⁷⁶ The precise distinction between this hell and the places of punishment is unclear, however; in addition, according to the opening of the text, Paul is evidently in heaven; the subsequent places remain indeterminate. The confusion is no doubt at least in part the result of the extremely abbreviated form of the text compared to *VSP*. The identification with the places of punishment as ‘purgatory’ is equally problematic, as the text itself makes clear that penance is to be undertaken during life (§6). Isabel Moreira argues that the series of punishments in the text originally likely referred to hell, but may have been re-interpreted as a (form of) purgatory in the ninth century, when the scribe of *StG^I* re-titled the text as the *castigatio* of those *qui peccant et emendant*.⁷⁷⁷ It is difficult to draw conclusions from so little. It seems not improbable, since the word *infernus* is not used elsewhere in the text, that the *infernus* containing Paul’s family echoes Late Antique perceptions of a hell in the netherworld as a place for non-believers. Yet the fact of the matter is that the text itself simply does not offer any clear distinctions or boundaries and appears to present us with an image of a composite landscape in which there is room for both just and unjust souls (and their punishments)—perhaps not unlike Tertullian’s Hades—and which is not excluded from God’s mercy. Certainly, the punishment of burning, suffered by Paul’s family, is a continuous theme in the other sections as well.

A number of observations may, then, be made on the basis of the foregoing. I have already observed that hell is explicitly distinguished from other regions in the afterworld evidently intended for the wicked in *VL*, *TPP*, *FA* and *VT*. To this we might add that in three of these texts (*FA* excepted) there is also a sense that hell is for irredeemable souls. Only *VT* specifies clearly that the lowest hell is for those

⁷⁷⁴ *ANT*, pp. 637-8; Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, pp. 154-5. This is Jiroušková’s scene 28 in the Redactions, *op. cit.*, pp. 168, 173. At least one of the later Recensions (A) explicitly names this site as hell, though this is not explicit in *VSP*.

⁷⁷⁵ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 88-90.

⁷⁷⁶ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, pp. 269-70

⁷⁷⁷ Moreira, I., *Heaven's Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), pp. 132-4.

already judged,⁷⁷⁸ but it appears that the same is implied in *TPP* and possibly also in *VL*. As expected, hell is also generally portrayed as a place of punishment. In addition, there is an attempt at further sub-dividing, by reference to their degree of sinfulness (in different punishments) as well as their chance of salvation (i.e. they are to be saved or irredeemable), the types of souls which remain in punishment in hell in *FA*. By contrast, the first feature (distinction of punishment) is only applied to the ‘upper hell’ and valleys of punishment in *VT* and *TPP*, which have, moreover, separated the second element (chance of salvation) out into a second geographical space, where the two elements still co-exist in the hell in *FA*. Lastly, among the recurring geographical motifs relating to hell, such as rivers, we find two taking prominence. In *VL* hell is thought of as a fiery sea, a motif which *FA* too integrates into its highly complex assemblage of hellish landscapes. Elsewhere this idea is echoed in fiery rivers. In *TPP* and *VT* (and likely *Red.VI*) hell is presented as a pit or well, an image well-represented in the Bible⁷⁷⁹ and found in §41 of *VSP*.

4.2.2 The Kingdom of Heaven

Among the works discussed here there is only one text that does not contain an account of heaven; *VL*, for which we only have an incomplete copy. Five of the key texts tell us that the protagonist visited heaven (*Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, *FA*, *Lóchán*, *VT*), while in the two remaining works (*VF*, *TPP*) the visionary is only allowed a glimpse of it. A running thread through most of these accounts is the understanding of the heavenly kingdom as a city or congregation.

In *VF* and *TPP*, in which the visionaries are only allowed a glimpse of heaven, we find clear indications of this. As we have seen above,⁷⁸⁰ there is some similarity between the accounts of the visionaries’ experience of heaven in these last two texts. In *VF*, we may distinguish three vertical layers: the earth, the space ‘in the air’ where Fursa is together with the angels and devils, and the space behind the door (*ostium*), through which the angels, Beoán and Meldán enter and exit. This door is placed above him—he is ‘looking on high’ (*sursum aspiciens*)—and leads to heaven,

⁷⁷⁸ Whilst *FA* describes a place where the wicked souls reside after Judgement, this moment of judgement still lies in the future.

⁷⁷⁹ Cf. *lacus*: Ps 87:5, Isa. 38:18 *in lacum*, Ps 87:7 *in lacu inferiori, in tenebrosis, et in umbra mortis*, Isa. 14:15 *in profundum lacu*; *puteus*: Ps. 68:16 and of course Rev. 9:1-3.

⁷⁸⁰ Chapter 3.2.2, pp. 148-50.

as signified by Fursa's beatific experience when the door opens and he hears choirs of angels sing the words of the *Te Deum*,⁷⁸¹ with which the angels traditionally praise the Lord. From this brief glimpse of heaven we learn only that it is the place of the 'heavenly assembly' (*supernus conuentus*; §11, 16) and a place of 'joy and happiness' (*laetitia et gaudium*), where there is no sadness, 'unless by the reason of perdition of men' (*nisi de hominum perditione* §11). The heavenly assembly here appears to consist of the angels and saints, of which Beoán and Meldán are two.⁷⁸²

In *TPP* we find a system of three different vertical layers; here they represent the possible locations through which the soul may travel in the hereafter. When Owein is taken to the top of a mountain in the earthly paradise by the archbishops, he sees the 'gate of the heavenly paradise' (*porta celestis paradysi*) above him (*sursum aspiciens*).⁷⁸³ The gate functions as the doorway between the earthly paradise and heaven, with which the heavenly paradise appears to be equated.⁷⁸⁴ In addition, heaven is referred to as *celorum mansio* (§19) and the *superna sanctorum leticia* (§17).⁷⁸⁵ The similarities with Fursa's vision of the entrance to heaven—the door above, the experience of bliss—together with the verbal parallels here quoted suggest that H. of Saltrey was drawing on *VF* directly for inspiration for this scene, even if he does not mention the text as a source in his introduction.

In the preceding paragraph the archbishops explain to Owein that souls may ascend from the tortures to the earthly paradise, and from there to heaven, so that the population of each increases and decreases daily. Only those who are chosen (*sumuntur*) are allowed into heaven.⁷⁸⁶ It follows from this progressive scheme that

⁷⁸¹ §11. *et quasi per quattuor choros cantantium multitudines angelorum ac dicentium: Sanctus sanctus sanctus dominus deus Sabaoth.*

⁷⁸² §11. *uidit immensa agmina eximia claritate fulgentia angelorum praecedentium sanctorumque hominum.*

⁷⁸³ *Easting*, p. 144, ll. 884-8; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 70 (§18).

⁷⁸⁴ In §§17-8 the terms appear to be used interchangeably. The souls enter in *celestum paradysum* (ll. 884-5), in *celum* (l. 889, 900).

⁷⁸⁵ See the following note.

⁷⁸⁶ *Easting*, p. 144, ll. 877-84: *Et licet a penis omnino liberi simus, ad supernam sanctorum leticiam nondum ascendere digni sumus. Diem enim et terminum nocte promotionis in melius nemo nostrum nouit. Ecce hic, ut uides, in magna requie sumus; sed post terminum singulis constitutum in maiorem transibimus. Cotidie enim societas nostra quodammodo crescit et decrescit, dum singulis diebus et a penis ad nos et a nobis in celestem paradysum ascendunt.*; *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 69-70 (§17-8) 'And although we are completely free from torments we are not yet worthy of rising to the higher joy of the saints. Yet none of us knows the day and the starting point of our advancement to a better state. And now, as you see, we live in great peace, but after the time limit laid down for each of us we will move to a greater peace. For each day our community in some way increases or decreases since every single day people ascend both from the torments to us and from us to the heavenly paradise.'

one may, in fact, attain access to heaven before Judgement Day. The archbishops tell Owein that

Sicut enim in locis penalibus secundum culparum quantitatem
morandi percipient spacium, ita et qui hic sumus secundum merita
bona plus minusue morabimur in ista requie.⁷⁸⁷

Thus both the sinners and the (imperfectly) good are made to wait (or suffer) for a time equivalent to their merit. H. of Saltrey himself relates this aspect of the text to what he presents as common beliefs of his time in his introduction. He expounds the belief that God has provided places for the physical punishments prepared by him for sinners, and presents a tripartite view of the afterlife which places torments at the bottom (because our faults weigh us down); the joys (of heaven) ‘towards which we ascend through virtue’ at the top; and ‘things halfway between good and evil’ in the middle.⁷⁸⁸ It is notable that while this agrees with what the archbishops tell Owein in the text, as we will see below, the schematics of the narrative in fact imply four levels.

Of the five texts in which the visionary is allowed to visit heaven, only two provide detailed descriptions of heaven and its inhabitants. The description of heaven in *Red. VI* is the briefest and most problematic. As mentioned above, while *Red. VI* tells us that Paul visited the first heaven, it remains unclear whether the punishments are meant to be located there. The text simply uses *in alio loco* for every new paragraph without specifying where this other place is located.⁷⁸⁹ We can be relatively certain, however, that the first heaven, at the very least, encompasses the tree with manifold branches of §2: *In primo caelo uidit arborem quae habebat milia arma*.⁷⁹⁰ According to the text, this is the location of the just and the innocent. The scene appears to be loosely based on *VSP* §22, in which the trees bear a thousand fruits and are equally associated with the worthy.

⁷⁸⁷ *Easting*, p. 144, ll. 874-77; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 69 ‘And as the length of their stay in the places of punishment is given according to the number of their sins, likewise we who are here will stay in this place of rest more or less according to our good merits.’

⁷⁸⁸ *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 44-5; *Easting*, p. 47-50 *Creduntur tamen tormenta maxima, ad que culpa deorsum premit, in imo esse, et maxima uero gaudia, ad que sursum per iusticiam ascenditur, in summo; in medio autem bona esse et mala [media]*.

⁷⁸⁹ *Le* instead uses ordinals, but equally fails to specify where these places are.

⁷⁹⁰ ‘In the first heaven he saw a tree which had a thousand branches’. Note that in the other two manuscripts the number of branches is changed dramatically into even greater numbers and that in *Le* the tree even blooms. I have not included the reference to the heaven *de pecunia multa* in §10 as the text is clearly corrupt here and I doubt that a pleasant location was intended. See further Appendix E.

Red. XI also describes trees, but as mentioned in 2.3.3, it is unique in combining the trees at the gates of paradise (*VSP* §24) with a hanging punishment (§3) and with a beast-filled river (§4).⁷⁹¹ As a result of this combination, the text switches quite suddenly to scenes of punishment. The text opens, however, with a description of heaven which draws on Revelation, Mark and, in particular, on *VSP* §29.⁷⁹² Paul sees the Son of God at his Father's right hand and a city in heaven, with twelve walls and twelve towers, and an altar in its midst (§2). The city is presented somewhat like a congregation. Standing over the altar, the Son of God praises his Father; the response is given by the *hominum sanctorum* on the walls (§2). As we shall see below, the same imagery is partly reduplicated in the text in §9-10, describing the virgins in paradise and the land of the saints.

Similar imagery also appears in *FA*. At the centre of the *maig muintire nime* is the fiery throne of the Lord himself (*rígsuide* §17). The description of the Lord in §20-1 is invoked through an inexpressibility topos, but presents an image of the Lord as a great fiery brightness.⁷⁹³ He is surrounded by the household of heaven, which appears, as in *Red. XI*, much like a congregation. Indeed, it has been suggested by J.J. Colwell that the descriptions in these scenes are derived from ecclesiastical architecture. He, for instance, identifies the throne, with its arch above it and the four pillars supporting it (§17, 19), with the altar and its baldachin and the 'angel candles' with overhanging lamps.⁷⁹⁴ Nearest to the Lord, in his chair, there are noble birds that celebrate the offices, supported by the archangels; the response is sung (as

⁷⁹¹ Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, pp. 110-36; O'Sullivan, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹² O'Sullivan provides full references to Biblical quotations in the text in his edition. *VSP* §29, *P*: *Et uidi in medio ciuitatis altare magnum excelsum ualde. Et erat quidem stans iusta altare cuius uultus fulgebat sicut sol, ... et psallebat dicens alleluia! Et uox eius replebat omnem ciuitatem. Simulque exaudiebant eum omnes qui erant super turre et portas et respondebant alleluia.* (Silverstein and Hilhorst); 'And I saw in the midst of this city a great altar, very high, and there was someone standing near the altar whose countenance shone as the sun, ... and he sang saying, 'Alleluia!' and his voice filled the whole city; at the same time, when all they who were on the towers and gates heard him, they responded, 'Alleluia!'" (*ANT*, p. 632.). The last sentence of §2 in *Red. XI*, reading 'Unclean is the one who does not say "Amen"', can be explained with reference to *VSP* §30, in which the angel explains to Paul that it is a sin not join others in singing "Alleluia".

⁷⁹³ §20-1 *Ar ní innisfeá nech a bruth 7 a bríg, a deirge 7 a rosoillse, a áiniús 7 a afbniús, a chumlacht 7 a chobsaidecht. ... Ní aicfeá dano deilb ndoenna fair do chinn ná coiss acht ina dlúim deirg theintide for lassad fón mbith 7 cách for crith 7 for uamain reime.* 'For no one will tell of his blazing and his power, his redness and his great brightness, his glory and his delightfulness, his abundance and his steadfastness. ... he will find his noble face on every side, seven times brighter than the sun. But he will not find a human shape upon him, with head or foot, but a fiery mass burning throughout the world, and everyone trembling and fearful before him.'

⁷⁹⁴ Colwell, *Fís Adamnán*, pp. 47-8. *FA* §24 as quoted on p. 174, n. 664.

above) by the household (§18). There is a multitude of angels and archangels singing choral songs to him, forming sets of choirs (§18, 20). The inhabitants of the household of heaven appear to be arranged around the throne in circles, with their faces turned to God, but in such a way that none has their back or side to the other (§19, 21, 23).⁷⁹⁵ In addition, a beam of light, three indescribable zones and warriors in the shapes of horses and birds surround the throne (§19, 21). This circular arrangement extends further outwards: the throne is set at the heart of a city surrounded by seven walls, each higher than the other, made of coloured crystal (§22). In addition, the city itself is within the heavenly kingdom, which also includes the land of the saints (see below). The kingdom itself, in turn, is surrounded by a ring of fire through which anyone entering or leaving must pass, though it harms none (§14).⁷⁹⁶ The intricate arrangement of all this is no doubt intended as an indication of the Lord's ineffable power (*cumachta diaisnéte*). The description itself obviously owes something to that of the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev. 21:10-21, in which Jerusalem also has multiple walls and is described with reference to precious stones and crystal, and to that in *VSP* §29, in which each of the walls is incrementally higher, though it differs from both in only counting seven walls.⁷⁹⁷ A source for this description has, to the best of my knowledge, not been identified, but a similar, equally complex, description of heaven as a city is also found *Saltair na Rann* (*SnR*). The city described there likewise has multiple walls of incremental height, with a great many doors in this case, made of gold and precious stones. It has a throne at its centre surrounded by the ranks of the angelic orders, the virgins, saints and the penitent, and singing birds. The 'children of Adam' are outside the city in *faithchi* and *airfortaig*, thus, as in *FA*, separated from the host inside.⁷⁹⁸ Carey has argued

⁷⁹⁵ §19 *Trí cressa ina móorthimchel* 'three zones in a great circuit around [the arch]'; §21 *ruithen amal rétlainn rí ina móorthimhell* 'a beam of light like royal stars in a great circuit around him'; §23 *gnúis fri gnúis ina srethaib 7 ina coróinib comardaib móorthimhell ind rígsuide immacuairt ... 7 a n-aiged uile fri Dia* 'face to face in their equally lofty rows and circles, in a great circuit around the throne ... and the face of every one of them turned toward God'.

⁷⁹⁶ *Circull teintide dano imon tír-sin immacuairt (imon tír-sin: imo muintir-sin B)*. The fire thus appears to form a sort of wall shielding heaven from the outside, presumably earth(?), and is reminiscent of the wall of fire Fursa had to pass through.

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. Carey, *op. cit.*, notes to §22,1-3 and above, n. 792.

⁷⁹⁸ *SnR* canto 2 (ll. 337-656). I have used the revised, annotated edition and translation by David Greene, made available posthumously on the DIAS website (in bibliography as Greene, D. (ed. and trans.), *Annotated Edition and Translation of Saltair na Rann* (Dublin: DIAS, 1981). The word *faithche* (l. 373ff) was translated by David Greene as 'lawn', and *airfortach* (l. 385ff) as 'portico'. As discussed by Carey in 'The Heavenly City in *Saltair na Rann*', *Celtica* 18 (1986) 87-104, pp. 89-90,

convincingly that *SnR* draws on a variety of sources, including Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*, *VSP* and the description of the heavenly Jerusalem from an Old Latin version of Ezekiel;⁷⁹⁹ we may perhaps assume some of the same sources inspired the equally eclectic description in *FA*. The general similarity between the two descriptions suggests the author of *FA* was drawing on established motifs rather than any particular source.

The number of walls—seven rather than twelve—of the heavenly city most likely reflects the soul's journey through the seven heavens in §§29-38.⁸⁰⁰ In this part of the text, the soul ascends upwards through the heavens until it reaches the seventh heaven, where it is presented for judgement. There are six doorways through which the soul has to pass, at each of which a 'guardian and doorkeeper' (*coimétaid 7 doirseóir*) has been placed (§30). By contrast with the description of the Kingdom of Heaven, the emphasis in this section switches to the individual soul's progress, which is described with almost meticulous attention. Distinction is made between the righteous and the sinful only, which is expressed in the nature of the soul's experience and its consequent length of stay in each heaven. The righteous soul is, with the exception of the second heaven, not punished in the course of its ascent, while the sinful soul suffers punishments in each of the first five heavens; the sixth heaven is free of punishments and the seventh heaven is the seat of the Creator and the place where judgement is meted out. At the doorways of the first heaven and second heaven two virgins await the soul; at the first, they scourge sinners with iron rods (§31), at the second, with fiery whips (§32). They are not named here, but we know from the other three witnesses to this part of the text that the virgins were

the wider sense of *faitche* is 'enclosure, courtyard' or 'atrium'; while *airfortach*, otherwise only attested in the *VL* also discussed here, would appear to mean 'portico', arguably as an abstraction of Irish *air-* and a borrowing of Latin *porticus* as *portach*, by analogy with *airdam* (with *dom* 'house') used elsewhere in *FA* (see p. 224 below). Both words appear more or less analogous with *irbothaib*, used in *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* to indicate a place outside of the Kingdom of Heaven allocated to the *sil Adaim do neoch at-bath díb ria crochad Crist* 'the souls of Adam's offspring who died before Christ's crucifixion'. In *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* the *sil Adaim* refers to those temporarily rescued out of hell by Christ. However, in *SnR* they are portrayed as joyful and peaceful and may perhaps be compared rather to the saints in *FA*'s land of saints than to those who reside in hills and marshes.

⁷⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*

⁸⁰⁰ This part of the text has previously been the subject of much discussion, notably in Dumville, 'Towards'; Stevenson, 'Ascent'; Bauckham, 'The Apocalypse'; and Carey, 'The Seven Heavens', mostly concerning its possible origins. A new introduction, and editions of all witnesses, may now be found in Carey, *et al.*, *The End and Beyond*.

meant to represent the four cardinal virtues.⁸⁰¹ Only two doorkeepers are named here: the first gate is guarded by the archangel Michael, the second by Uriel.⁸⁰² In addition to the punishment of the sinful souls by the virgins, the second heaven also contains a fiery stream, which cleanses the souls of the righteous of their guilt, and a well, which comforts the righteous, but burns the sinners (§32). The righteous then travel onwards without hindrance, while the sinners are detained in a fiery furnace (§33), a fiery stream (§33), or a fiery whirlpool (§35) for twelve (or sixteen §35) years each time. In this part of the text, then, we do not find separate locations for different types of sinners, but rather different experiences for each soul in the same location, depending on its guilt. In the seventh heaven the righteous soul is received joyfully, whilst the sinful soul is greeted harshly and thrown into hell (§37). There is no indication that anything other than the judgement of the individual immediately following their death is intended, as, indeed, the text specifies (§39).⁸⁰³

In the section on the heavenly household there likewise are a few references to the Lord presiding as judge: he has ministers going back and forth with messages, which are either harsh or gentle (§20). The host of the household of heaven is described as a ‘very mild, very gentle community, without the lack of anything good’;⁸⁰⁴ echoing the exordium. The heavenly household includes what one might call

⁸⁰¹ Seymour, 'The Seven Heavens in Irish Literature', p. 20. Rudolf Willard compared the different witnesses and the names of angels and gates contained in them in the introduction to his edition of the Old English copy; see Willard, R., ed., 'The Apocryphon of the Seven Heavens', in Willard, R. (ed.), *Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies*, Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie 30 (Leipzig: Verlag von Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1935), pp. 1-30, p. 11ff. The relevance of the cardinal virtues in this context might perhaps be illuminated with reference to their explanation by Isidore of Seville (who uses the standard terminology rather than the names used in the Old English seven heavens): “Prudence (*prudencia*) has to do with how the bad is distinguished from the good in affairs. Fortitude (*fortitudo*), how adversity may be borne with equanimity. Temperance (*temperantia*), how passion and the desire for things may be reined in. Justice (*iustitia*), how to each is distributed his own by right judging.” (*Etymologiae* II.xxiv.6, trans. Barney, *et al.*, p.79). We might imagine, perhaps, that the soul is tested against each of these to see whether it is found wanting.

⁸⁰² The angel Uriel (the name means Fire of God) is portrayed as an angel of penance in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and the *Sibylline Oracles*; and is one of the rod-bearing angels punishing Satan in the *Questions of Bartholomew* (ANT, pp. 604, 614, 664). He is also known as the angel announcing the end-time and as the angel of Gehenna (Adler, C., *et al.* (eds.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1901-06) s.v. Uriel, access through jewishencyclopedia.com).

⁸⁰³ According to the text, the angel revealed to Adomnán visions *céitimthusa cecha anma iar techt a curp* ‘of the first experiences of every soul after going out of the body’.

⁸⁰⁴ §22. *Muintir romín rochennais dano cen esbaid nacha maithiusa foraib.*

the ‘perfect’,⁸⁰⁵ though this group is apparently described twice: the first time it includes the twelve apostles and Mary, patriarchs, prophets and disciples, other holy virgins, and infants (§15); the second time the text lists holy virgins, pilgrims, penitents devoted to God (§22).⁸⁰⁶ Both Wright and Carey have already pointed out that the reference to pilgrims here is best placed in the light of the Irish tradition of exile *pro amore Dei*, which was referred to as white martyrdom (red martyrdom being equivalent to death).⁸⁰⁷ The group of penitents in *FA* may then perhaps be identified with those who perform *glasmartrae* or ‘blue martyrdom’, which, as Clare Stancliffe has demonstrated, is equated with penitence.⁸⁰⁸ A parallel may be adduced from the *SnR* for clarification: there it reads that among the three classes of persons allowed into the heavenly city are those who ‘perform great penances’ (*amra athirge*).⁸⁰⁹ It is not unlikely, then, that the penitents mentioned in *FA* are most likely those who were zealous in their penance; or at the very least, we may infer that have finished their penance before death, unlike those outside the city (see below).⁸¹⁰ As mentioned above, *FA* thus incorporates two radically different interpretations of heaven, which were no doubt meant to be considered complementary rather than comprehensive. What they share is that the Kingdom of Heaven, if equated with the seventh heaven, is the prerogative of a very select group of souls, which we may equate with the ‘perfecti’.⁸¹¹

The vision of Lóchán, though it does not mention a city or congregation, nevertheless has some similarities with *FA*: Lóchán sees the Lord on His throne (*in*

⁸⁰⁵ Cf. Carey, ‘Fís Adomnáin’, note to §22,6-8, where he adduces parallels from *Saltair na Rann* and the *Elucidarium* of Honorius Augustodunensis, who explicitly distinguishes “between the *perfecti*, who will possess the kingdom of heaven, and the *iusti*, who will only dwell in a kind of paradise”.

⁸⁰⁶ *noemóig nó ailithrig nó aithrigig*. Note that for *noemóig* *BYQ* read *noím*; and that *YLU* omit *nó aithrigig*.

⁸⁰⁷ Carey, *King of Mysteries*, p. 270; Wright, ‘Next-to-Last Things’. In fact, in §22 those who cross the bridge without difficulty are identified as the *aes dergmartra dúthrachtaige do Dia* ‘the folk of zealous martyrdom for God’. On the significance of exile in Irish society see Charles-Edwards, T.M., ‘The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*’, *Celtica* 11 (1976) 43-59.

⁸⁰⁸ Stancliffe concludes that blue martyrdom must refer to “the tears, hardships and fasting of the penitents” (Stancliffe, C., ‘Red, White and Blue Martyrdom’, in Whitelock, D., *et al.* (eds.), *Ireland in Early and Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982), pp. 21-46, p. 44). Our earliest source for this imagery, the *Cambrai Homily*, identifies *glasmartrae* as follows: *intain scaras fria thola leó uel céssas sáithor i ppennit ocus aithrigi* ‘when by means of them [fasting and labour] he separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance’ (quoting the *textus restitutus* in Stokes, W. and J. Strachan (eds.), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1901-3; repr. Dublin, 1987), p. ii.247).

⁸⁰⁹ *SnR* 452; trans. from Carey, ‘The Heavenly City in *Saltair na Rann*’, p. 96.

⁸¹⁰ Stancliffe adduces evidence suggesting the term *glasmartrae* may have been used to indicate those who chose a life of penitence voluntarily (noting a close association with virtuous widows), but leaves the issue open due to the paucity of evidence (*op. cit.*, pp. 42-4).

⁸¹¹ See below, p. 226.

Coimdhi fesin 'na ríghuidhi) and hears the music of the bird-flock (cf. *FA* §15, 21). In addition, he sees a single bird singing, which is identified as Michael. This bird-motif is not uncommon in imagery of heaven, but it is equally common in the type of tale—an *immram* or 'voyage tale'—in which the vision of Lóchán is included.⁸¹² In fact, it is a running theme in *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* itself, in which souls generally take the shape of birds. For instance, when the three brothers embark on their sea voyage, they see the soul of one their shipmates, when he dies, return to them as a bird (§46). Subsequently they encounter a cleric on an island with birds, which, the cleric explains, are the souls of men (§52) and a nun in the form of a bird speaks to them about the fate of the (bird-)souls they encounter (§§52-9). The image of heaven portrayed here thus forms a fitting adaptation of earlier imagery into the tradition of otherworldly bird-souls which informs the rest of the narrative. The two landscapes are very different, but not necessarily incompatible, since, as Wright has pointed out, the interim landscape, in the form of islands, visited by Lóchán and his crew, seems to describe the *boni non ualde*, the *boni ualde*, the *mali non ualde* and the *mali ualde*, but not, apparently, the 'perfect', or, for that matter, heaven or hell itself.⁸¹³ Lóchán's vision earlier in the narrative, perhaps in anticipation of the later voyage, does not mention the inhabitants of heaven and hell, apart from Michael, nor does it comment on the fate of the individual soul.

Finally, *VT*, like *FA*, presents an image of heaven subdivided into different areas, arranged along the same pattern of progression informing the rest of Tnugdál's journey. In *VT*, the dark, hellish part of the afterworld is complemented by the 'World of Light', which contains all good souls, ranging from the not-very-good to the perfect. In this half, each area is typically separated from the next with a wall of increasing beauty: a high wall, a wall of silver, a wall of gold, and a wall of precious stones. In her introduction, de Pontfarcy has already argued that the area behind the gold wall and the lower hell stand in opposite relation to each other both structurally and thematically as the lowest and highest points on the eschatological ladder; the

⁸¹² Other examples may be found in e.g. *Immram Curaig Maele Dúin*, for which see Oskamp, H.P.A., *The Voyage of Máel Dúin: A Study in Early Irish Voyage Literature* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1970) as well as in *Immram Snédgusa 7 Maic Ríagla* (see now Murray, K., 'The Voyaging of St. Columba's Clerics', in Carey, J., et al. (eds.), *The End and Beyond*). *SnR* canto 2, ll. 617-24 also mention singing birds around the Lord's throne, but it is unclear whether they are souls.

⁸¹³ Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'.

area behind the gold wall would appear to represent the ‘superior heaven’.⁸¹⁴ This area is, however, divided into two sections: the first, the residence of the martyrs, the chaste, monks and nuns, and builders of churches (§§19-21); the second, behind the wall of precious stones, the nine ranks of the angels, patriarchs, virgins, and other holy persons, as well as the Lord himself, together with St Patrick and the other Irish bishops (§§22-4). That the entire area must be identified as the Kingdom or the household of heaven is suggested by the ascent preceding it and by the fact that the inhabitants of the area behind the gold wall appear to be almost in direct contact with the Lord.⁸¹⁵ However, there remains a distinct difference between the areas behind the gold wall and that behind the wall of precious stones. There, Tnugdal is allowed to see things otherwise hidden and allowed to hear what man may not and cannot utter.⁸¹⁶ He is among the saints, angels, patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, virgins, apostles and confessors,⁸¹⁷ and is allowed to behold God himself. In addition, he is able to contemplate at once not only all the places of glory and punishment he had seen before, but also the entire earth; and knowledge of everything is available to him. In the ‘superior’ part of the World of Light, there are then two sections (which, as I will discuss below, are preceded by a third area), each further removed in distance from God: in this respect the text is very similar to *FA*. While the inhabitants of this area are much the same as those mentioned in *FA*, there is less emphasis on the description of this location as a city. Certain features are still there, however: the area is delineated with walls, and its inhabitants are repeatedly referred to as choirs. The organisation of the World of Light, however, is primarily informed by and concerned with the categories of souls residing there.

4.2.2.1 Paradise and the Land of Saints

Some of these texts describe pleasant abodes located close to the divinity. In *FA* this is the land of saints; in *TPP* this is paradise; in *Red. XI* and *VT* we appear to have a little of both. Belief in an earthly paradise, as mentioned above, has a Biblical

⁸¹⁴ *Tnugdal*, p. 57-8, 60.

⁸¹⁵ The martyrs and the chaste are singing to him (*et cantabant domino alleluia* §19, *Pfeil*, p. 49), the monks and nuns are ‘used to the presence of the holy Trinity’ and know no separation ‘from the communion of saints’ (*utuntur presentia sancte trinitatis; ulterius non disiungitur a consortio sanctorum* §20, *Pfeil*, p. 51). See further below.

⁸¹⁶ The text quotes 1 Cor 2:9 and 2 Cor 12:4.

⁸¹⁷ Picard omits the saints and confessors from his translation of this passage (*Tnugdal*, p. 152; *Pfeil*, p. 54).

precedent in the garden of Eden in Gen. 2-3. The notion that paradise is a verdant garden is ancient; it can be traced back to Sumerian sources and the word itself is derived from Persian.⁸¹⁸ While paradise can indicate an earthly location, it is also frequently located within the heavens, most notably in the third heaven, and has been recognised as the abode of the righteous from early times.⁸¹⁹ Paradise and the 'land of saints' are discussed here together, because in all cases these areas are separated by degree from 'heaven proper', so to speak, where the Lord himself resides with his host.

In *Red. XI* §§9-10 we find a description of virgins in paradise and of the *locus sanctorum*, both of which seem to be in the same place.⁸²⁰ Both descriptions are modelled on that of the city of heaven in §2, and likewise draw heavily on *VSP* §29⁸²¹ and (through it, perhaps) on *Revelation*. The topic of the five wise virgins is drawn from Matt. 25:1, but they are described in a manner similar to those around the throne of the Lord in Rev. 4, 7:9; they are seated, wearing golden crowns and white garments, with palms around them and books in their hands, and they praise the Lord with a voice like water,⁸²² singing the opening of the *Te Deum: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*. These virgins deserved their place because they were merciful, kind and pious, without evil, lies, harsh words or avarice, and performed their prayer and vigils.⁸²³ In §10, the angel takes Paul to the place of the saints, which appears to be inside or near the entrance to paradise, where their names are written on a golden tablet. Like the altar in §2, this place is surrounded by twelve walls, but here are also four rivers: one of oil, one of wine, one of milk and one of honey. This scene is almost certainly modelled on *VSP* §23, where the four rivers

⁸¹⁸ Partin, H.B., 'Paradise', in Jones, *et al.*, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp. 6981-86, p. 6981; Wright, *The Early History*, pp. 187-8, 197ff.; van Ruiten, 'Garden of Eden—Paradise'.

⁸¹⁹ van Ruiten, 'Garden of Eden—Paradise', p. 660, finds this concept already in *4 Ezra* and the *Testament of Abraham*.

⁸²⁰ The text equates the closing of the gates of paradise with the *locus sanctorum*, and both with the closing of heaven: §10 *Ipsa est locus sanctorum. Ibi habitabunt usque ad diem resurrectionis. Et clausae sunt porte paradisi usque ad diem iudicii. In manu Petri et Pauli clausae [s]unt regni celorum*. 'That is the place of the saints. There they will dwell until the day of the resurrection. And the gates of paradise are closed until the Day of Judgement. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are in the hand of Peter and of Paul.' O'Sullivan, *op. cit.*; Cf. Matt. 16:19.

⁸²¹ See above p. 216, n. 792.

⁸²² The references to them being surrounded by a cloud like the precious sun and to their feet is perhaps an echo of Rev. 10:1.

⁸²³ *Ipsae sunt quinque sponse Christi, quae faciunt uoluntatem Patris mei qui in celis est, nec mendaci dixerunt in uita earum. Et non solum autem hoc, sed misericordiam et benignitatem fecerunt, et pietatem et oratione et uigilia custodierunt, et non asperam earum uerba, et neque de corde earum cogitationis male procedunt, neque auaritiam fuit in eis.*

each form the location for groups of the righteous. This place is where the saints are until the Resurrection, and the gates of paradise are closed until then. The paradise of *Red. XI* thus draws on similar imagery for both its description of the heavenly city and the place of the saints, making little distinction between them, apart from the explicit statement that its gates remain closed. Given that saints and virgins are nonetheless able to attain this place to wait there in the interim period, we are led to presume that the gates referred to are those between paradise and heaven rather than between paradise and earth or lower regions, and that, on Judgement Day, they will open to receive all the righteous. Unfortunately the text gives no explanation regarding the soul's journey to these places.

The land of saints (*tír na noem*) in *FA* is described as a *tír suthach solusta* ('fruitful radiant land' §12) divided into four sections according to the cardinal directions; it is reminiscent of the verdant *terra repromissionis* of *VSP* §§21-3 and, more remotely, of the paradisiacal garden.⁸²⁴ Its inhabitants wear white linen and white cowls and are nourished by the music and the radiance coming from the household of heaven, and the fragrance which is in their land (§12-3).⁸²⁵ They are all equally close to the contemplation of the heavenly city, which is to the southeast. There is, however, a golden portico (*erdam órda*) with a crystalline veil (*fial glainide*) between them, through which they may observe the 'semblance and shadow' (*fuath ⁊ foscud*) of the heavenly household (§14). Looking through this veil from the side of the heavenly city, however, it is not there, so that the heavenly household can see the saints clearly.⁸²⁶

⁸²⁴ Dumville, 'Towards', p. 75; Carey, 'Fís Adomnáin', note to §12. Carey argues that the four-fold division of the land of saints echoes the four rivers of *VSP* §23. Though there is no indication in the land of saints of subdivision by merit, we may perhaps compare a passage from Ambrose, who places souls of various degrees of virtue in the four corners: 'When the first trumpet sounds, it collects those towards the east, as the chief and elect; when the second sounds, those nearly equal in merit, who, being placed towards Libanus, have abandoned the follies of the nations; when the third, those who as it were, tossed on the sea of this world, have been driven here and there by the waves of this life; when the fourth, those who have by no means been able sufficiently to soften the hardness of their hearts by the commandments of spiritual utterance, and therefore are said to be towards the north—for, according to Solomon, the north is a hard wind.' (Ambrose, *On the death of Satyrus*, bk II.115.)

⁸²⁵ §12 *co caslaib lín gil impu; co culpaitib gléigelaib uasa cennaib*; §13 *Ar ní aidilcniget ind nóim ó ní aile acht éisteacht in cheóil risa coistet ⁊ innithmigud inna soillse ad-déicet ⁊ a sásad don boltnugud fil isin tír.*

⁸²⁶ §14 *Ní fil immorro fial ná temel eter muintir nime ⁊ inna noemu*. Wright recently pointed out that *B*, which is missing the word *fial* at this point, must preserve the better reading, notwithstanding the fact that all other witnesses have this word, because he considers the text contradictory. However, as I shall discuss below (p. 231-2), the contradiction is not in the presence of the word in the text, but in the ability of the heavenly household, with 'divine vision', to see what the saints cannot, according to their rank. As we shall see, this is one of two points of entry to the city, each with similar properties.

This will be the situation only until Doomsday, when the Lord will allow them to contemplate Him directly *cen fial cen fíorscáth eturru* ('without veil or shadow between them' §16).

In *VT* there are no less than three groups of souls located between the wall of gold and the wall of precious stones: these are the martyrs and the chaste, the monks and nuns, and the builders of churches. The first group have either sacrificed their blood and become martyrs or sacrificed their body through chastity and thus deserved the 'crown of triumph'.⁸²⁷ In a manner not altogether different from the saints of *Red. XI*, they are seated on seats adorned with gems, wear crowns and all sorts of finery, and sing 'Alleluia' (§19).⁸²⁸ The monks and nuns are in a type of encampment (*castra et papiliones plurimi* §20), from where all sorts of delightful music sounds. This is the place of rest (*requies*) for those who served obediently. They have earned thrones as well as pavilions, from which they praise the Lord. *Tnugdál* is not allowed to enter the tents as they are only for those worthy to be united with the *chori angelorum* (§20).⁸²⁹ The third group (§21) is under a verdant, flowering tree, abundant with fruits and birds. This is reminiscent of the tree-motif we have seen above, but here the tree represents the Church. The inhabitants are in cells of gold and wear crowns and sceptres. The three areas together appear to be understood as, more or less, a community of holy persons.⁸³⁰ As they are placed only just outside the place where the Lord resides, they must be regarded as the near-perfect, but even within this section, each group appears to be slightly better than the next. Thus the souls of the monks and nuns are even more brilliant and fragrant than those *Tnugdál* had seen before.⁸³¹ The narrative carefully maintains its gradual upward progression in this way. However, (unlike the saints in *FA*) the holy persons here appear to be in their permanent place of reward: there is no indication that their position is temporary, unlike that of the faithful spouses on the other side of the wall

⁸²⁷ §19 *et ideo coronas triumphales habere meruerunt*. Pfeil, p. 50.

⁸²⁸ §19 *plurima sedilia de auro et gemmis. et uniuersis preciosorum lapidum generibus constructa. et preciosissimis sericis cooperta. in quibus sedebant seniores uiri et femine. uestiti sericis. et stolis candidis. et thiaris. et uniuersis ornatibus. hisdem gemmis ornatas. ... et capillos habebant auro simillimos; et coronas habebant in capitibus aureas*. Pfeil, p. 49.

⁸²⁹ §20. Pfeil, pp. 50-1; *Tnugdál*, p. 149.

⁸³⁰ *Tnugdál*'s entrance to this area is announced in §18 as joining the *consortio sanctorum*; cf. §20. Pfeil, pp. 49, 51.

⁸³¹ *splendor ... et odor ... et sonus suauissimus uniuersam gloriam ante uisam superabant*. Pfeil, p. 51; *Tnugdál*, p. 150.

of gold, who still await judgement (§18). It is likely that the text was influenced by the eschatological theories of Honorius Augustodunensis in this regard, who interprets paradise as a spiritual place where the perfect may already contemplate the Godhead. He classifies among the *perfecti* those “who do more than is commanded”, such as martyrs, monks and virgins (e.g. VT §§19-20), and among the *imperfecti*, those who fulfil the Lord’s precepts without complaint, such as married people (e.g. VT §18), who will remain in ‘pleasant dwelling places’ (*amoenissima habitacula*) until Doomsday.⁸³²

While in these three texts the paradise or the land of saints seems to be located within heaven, *TPP* distinguishes between both an earthly and a heavenly paradise. As mentioned above, the latter is not described for us in detail, as it is hidden behind a door in the sky and appears to be equated with heaven. It is described as a greater peace compared with the earthly paradise in which Owein meets the archbishops. Contrary to the other texts discussed here, *TPP* explicitly states that souls will be able to migrate up to the heavenly paradise once they have stayed for their allocated time limit.⁸³³

By contrast, the text provides quite a lengthy description of the earthly paradise, which is equated with the paradise from which Adam and Eve were expelled.⁸³⁴ It has many familiar features: it is located beyond a wall with a door decorated with precious stones, out of which door comes a sweet fragrance. Looking through it, he sees a bright land with light surpassing the sun.⁸³⁵ It consists of beautiful, verdant fields, where it is never night.⁸³⁶ When Owein arrives there, he is greeted by a multitude of holy persons of every religious order. Their clothes reflect their earthly rank, but they are white, gold, silver or multi-coloured and shining

⁸³² *Tnugdál*, pp. 57-8; McNamara, 'Introduction', §3.2. Cf. the passage on the Last Judgement quoted by McNamara in 'Aspects' (p. 57), which places the *iusti et perfecti cum Christo*, and states that they are not subject to judgement.

⁸³³ See p. 214, n. 786 above.

⁸³⁴ §17 *Patria igitur ista terrestris est paradysus, de qua propter inobedientie culpam eiectus est Adam prothoplastus*. Easting, p. 143, ll. 837-39; ‘Now, this land is the earthly paradise, from which the first man, Adam, was expelled for his sin of disobedience.’ *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 68. The inclusion here of primordial history is something typical of apocalypses. See e.g. Appendix B below.

⁸³⁵ §16 *portam ... uidebat, que metallis diuersis lapidibus[que] pretiosis ornata mirabili fulgore radiabat. ... tante suauitatis odor ... per eam exiit...; patriam solis splendorem claritate nimia uincente lustratam uidit*, Easting, p. 141, ll. 755-59, 763-4; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 65.

⁸³⁶ *Erat autem tota patria quasi prata amena atque uirentia, diuersis floribus fructibusque herbarum multiformium et arborum decorate, ... Nox illam nunquam obscurat*. Easting, p. 142, ll. 792-96. *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 66.

splendidly. Those who live there are in communities, in different places, but free to move and mingle. There are also choirs praising God (§16).⁸³⁷ In short, it is a place where everything is *placata*, *placita* and *grata* ('peaceful, pleasant, and agreeable').

The imagery used to describe the land of the saints and the (earthly or heavenly) paradise draws on much the same sources as that which we encounter in descriptions of heaven. The bright, bejeweled city and the verdant garden are both (authenticating) stock descriptions, as are the golden crowns and the bright garments, which are symbolic of a pure soul.⁸³⁸ The holy persons located here are repeatedly said to be praising, worshipping and singing to the Lord—the phrase “Alleluia!” is frequently quoted—in imitation of the state of contemplation of the risen saints.⁸³⁹ Any significant distinction made between these areas and heaven (if at all), is first and foremost informed by the expectation of judgement, and, second, by graded levels of sanctity and sinfulness. Thus, while in *Red. XI* paradise would appear to be part of the third heaven, it is nevertheless set apart, as it is closed until Doomsday, while conversely, in *VT*, where the holy are just outside the wall of precious stones, separated from the nine grades of angels, there is no indication that their condition is anything other than permanent. *FA* holds the middle ground in this respect: it separates areas just outside the Kingdom of Heaven both by means of features in the landscape and with reference to Doomsday. Each of these, are, therefore, either spatially or temporally, ‘interim’ places located close to the divinity.⁸⁴⁰ However, more importantly, they represent graded steps of access to the Lord himself, something which is perhaps most explicit in *TPP*, where the soul may literally move from one level to the next once its ‘access requirements’ are met. This type of hierarchy is built into the fabric of the geography, but it is also represented more subtly by somatic cues, such as sight and sound.

⁸³⁷ *Easting*, p. 141, ll. 766-79, 798-810; *Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 66-7.

⁸³⁸ This motif also has a long history. The soiled garment or blackness of the soul represents the soul's sinfulness, whereas its brightness represents its purity and glory. Elsewhere in Irish literature we find, for instance, the soul of Mael Sechnaill appears to Cairpre looking pitch black; but after prayers have been said for him for a year his soul appears white (*The Story of Cairpre Cromm and Mael Sechnaill son of Mael Ruanaid*, edited by John Carey in *The End and Beyond*). The motif is discussed in Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'.

⁸³⁹ McNamara, 'Introduction', §2.2.3; Daley, *The Hope*, p. 249.

⁸⁴⁰ This is a somewhat looser interpretation than that given by Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things', who uses the more restricted sense of the 'interim state' “as a post-mortem state of disembodied souls prior to the Last Judgement that involves some form of reward or punishment which is explicitly provisional in nature, and which is therefore assigned to provisional locations, whether entirely separate from heaven or hell, or at their thresholds, or within their confines.”

4.2.2.2 Access to the Divine Presence: Sights and Sounds as Markers of Hierarchy

*Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem.*⁸⁴¹

—1 Cor 13:12

The highest possible glory for the soul is to reach the heavenly household to be able to contemplate the Lord *facie ad faciem*, as per Paul's famous words in 1 Cor 13:12. The soul was not, traditionally, believed to be able to reach such a status until after the Resurrection, yet the Bible is far from clear—contradictory even—on the issue, so that the question whether it was possible for all or some of the souls of the just to experience God's presence before that time was debated throughout the Middle Ages.⁸⁴² Augustine had suggested on occasion that the souls of the just immediately experience God's presence, but not in the terms of vision or contemplation: the latter he reserved for the risen saints.⁸⁴³ He was followed in this by Julianus Pomerius (teacher of Caesarius of Arles) who was widely influential from the eighth century onwards. Both draw on Paul's authority, referring to 1 Cor 13:9.⁸⁴⁴ This notion of 'partial access' would remain relatively consistent: Bernard of Clairvaux (†1153 AD) offered the interpretation that the souls of the faithful could see Christ's humanity, but not his divinity, which would only be granted after the Resurrection.⁸⁴⁵ The natural inability of human souls to perceive the divine, and by extension, to reach the heavenly household, manifests itself in various ways in vision texts, and is contrasted with the heavenly power of the divine to mark levels of access or progression.

⁸⁴¹ 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face.'

⁸⁴² McGinn, B., 'Visio Dei: Seeing God in Medieval Theology and Mysticism', in Muessig, C. and A. Putter (eds.), *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 15-33, pp. 16-7. Indeed, Julian of Toledo wrote a treatise on precisely this topic, now referred to as *Utrum animae de humanis corporibus exeuntes mox deducantur ad gloriam uel ad poenam* ('Whether the souls going out from human bodies are immediately led to glory or to punishment'). Quoted in McNamara, 'Introduction', §5.1.

⁸⁴³ McNamara, 'Aspects', 49-50; *idem*, 'Introduction', §2.3.2; Daley, *The Hope*, p. 249. According to Daley, Augustine "never [spoke] of this beatitude before the Resurrection in terms of vision, or [in terms] of the 'angelic' activity of intuitive contemplation and ceaseless praise".

⁸⁴⁴ *Ex parte enim cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus*, 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.'

⁸⁴⁵ McNamara, 'Introduction', §5.1. It was not officially withdrawn until the fourteenth century. See McGinn, 'Visio Dei', p. 16.

Often the visionary is unable to behold either heaven itself or its inhabitants, or is granted no more than a glimpse, as in *VF* and *TPP*. For instance, when Fursa is first taken up, he is not able to see the shape of the angels because of their brightness, or, for that matter, that of the devils, on account of the darkness.⁸⁴⁶ Neither is he, at first, able to make out what the angels are singing.⁸⁴⁷ This is contrasted with his experience at the door to heaven in §11, when he is able, presumably either as a result of his transformation or by the grace of God, to both see and hear the angels clearly.⁸⁴⁸ Likewise, Paul, in *Red. XI*, is unable to look upon the seats and the bodies of the virgins in paradise, who are likened to fire and have eyes like the sun (§9).⁸⁴⁹ This motif highlights the fact that, as living souls, they are out of place in heaven. By contrast, Owein, though he is not granted access to heaven itself, appears to have no problem providing a detailed description of paradise. This may be explained because he visits an *earthly* paradise—a feature of the text in line with the author's attempt to keep Owein in the 'material' sphere. Consequently, Owein encounters no truly *heavenly* creatures on his journey.⁸⁵⁰ Indeed, the author himself thought the possibility of perceiving the heavenly was cause for comment and wrote that visionaries like Owein see things through signs, similar to material things, but intended to represent spiritual ones, for otherwise they would not be able to communicate their experiences upon their return.⁸⁵¹

However, once the visionary progresses to the heavens, as if he were a righteous soul, he may be granted access to things otherwise hidden from mankind and may be granted 'divine vision', that is, he may be given the experience of seeing through the eyes of the Lord. Often, the latter is also illustrated or equated with

⁸⁴⁶ §3 *quamuis propter claritatem luminis mira certitudine distinctim nihil corporeae potuit uidere formae*, 'but he could see nothing of their bodily form clearly because of the brightness of the light'; §6 *Et facies eorum numquam potuit uidere propter horrorem tenebrarum, sicut nec sanctorum angelorum propter nimiam claritatem* 'And he could never see their faces because of the horrific darkness, just as [he could not see those] of the holy angels because of the extreme brightness.'

⁸⁴⁷ §2 *unde pauca uix poterat intellegere* 'of [the singing] he is only able to make out a little.'

⁸⁴⁸ §11 *et circumdederunt eum angelorum agmina stantes etiam a dextris eius; angeli uerba sensus incolumis diuisus indiuisi audiebant et uidebat*. 'and hosts of angels surrounded him, standing at his right-hand side; in unimpaired perception, in undivided division he heard and saw the words of the angel.'

⁸⁴⁹ *Et sedem earum non possum ego aspicere* 'And I cannot gaze upon their seat.' ... *Sicut non possit qui[escere] flammam ignis; ita et corpora earum non possum aspicere; oculos earum sicut sol in firmamento caeli* 'Just as one may not [still] a flame of fire, so I cannot gaze upon their bodies, their eyes like the sun in the firmament of heaven'. O'Sullivan, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵⁰ The devils, though otherworldly and hellish, certainly do not qualify as 'heavenly'.

⁸⁵¹ Easting, pp. 122-3, ll. 65-71; *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 45.

knowledge. Thus, Tnugdál, once he gains access to the area behind the wall of precious stones—heaven, for all intents and purposes—is not only able to behold the household of heaven and the Lord himself, but also to see at a glance everything he saw before on his journey, as well as “the whole earth as if under a single ray of sun”,⁸⁵² and is able to look in every direction at once (much as the heavenly household in *FA* is able to contemplate the Lord from every direction). In addition, he is “given not only vision, but extraordinary knowledge” so that he knew everything (§22).⁸⁵³ There are numerous examples of similar instances in hagiographical literature, where the extraordinary vision and ability of saints to know the impossible testifies to their sanctity.⁸⁵⁴ This motif occurs also in Gregory the Great’s *Dialogi*, from which the author of *VT* draws his inspiration for this passage. He paraphrases Gregory’s statement that, to a soul that can see the Creator, all of Creation may seem small. Gregory explains that

ipse luce uisionis intimae, mentis laxatur sinus, tantumque expanditur in Deo, ut superior existat mundo: fit uero ipsa uidentis anima etiam super semetipsam. Cumque in Dei lumine rapitur super se, in interioribus ampliatur; et dum se sub se conspicit exaltata, comprehendit quam breue sit quod comprehendere humiliata non poterat.⁸⁵⁵

The soul, having attained heaven, like the Creator, becomes not only all-seeing but also all-knowing.

It is in this light also that we must interpret Fursa’s vision of the four fires (§8) and Laisrén’s vision of the souls in the doorway of hell (§9). Neither Fursa nor Laisrén have, of course, yet attained the heavenly kingdom, but they are given a glimpse of what the world looks like once it is seen with ‘divine vision’, that is, from a heavenly perspective. When Fursa looks beneath him and sees the dark valley with the four fires which will engulf the earth, he is looking at the state of the world as seen from heaven: a world increasingly consumed with sin (i.e. the four fires), which

⁸⁵² Pfeil, p. 54, *terrarum orbem quasi sub uno solis radio videre ualebant.*; Tnugdál, p. 153. This is a quote from Gregory the Great, *Dial.* II.35.

⁸⁵³ Pfeil, p. 54, *Non solum autem uisus, uerum etiam scientia dabatur ei insolita.*; Tnugdál, pp. 152-3.

⁸⁵⁴ A notable example is St. Columba, mentioned above, who is particularly well-known for his visionary abilities.

⁸⁵⁵ *Dial.* II.35, (*PL* 66:200) ‘The light of holy contemplation enlarges and expands the folds of the mind in God until it stands above the world. In fact, the soul that sees Him rises even above itself, and as it is carried above itself in His light it is enlarged within itself. Then, when it looks down from above, it sees how small everything is that he could not comprehend before.’ (adapted from Zimmerman, p. 106).

will ultimately consume the whole world (§8). Likewise, when Laisrén sees the souls of the people of Ireland, he sees them in their current state of sin. When he remarks that all these souls were alive when he left the body, the angel explains that *cech oen fail i n-etail De a mbethaid dit eis, iss ed indso for-accat a n-anmain 7 as airchenn arda-ta mani dernas aithrige*.⁸⁵⁶ Thus, the vision demonstrates how, in the afterworld, past, present and future are conflated into one, to reveal a larger eschatological truth: Laisrén now sees only their guilt. Grosjean has described this as a vision within a vision, as the souls are, of course, not actually there: they are still in their living bodies.⁸⁵⁷

I have already remarked that the ability to see and know is a marker of sanctity in persons. This similarly applies to the afterworld, where means of perception serve to signifying gradation. Thus, while Tnugdál is able to contemplate everything, once he has reached the Lord in the area behind the wall of precious stones, by contrast, the text quotes Solomon to the effect that ‘there [is] no wisdom or knowledge in hell’, which is furthest away from the Lord.⁸⁵⁸ Likewise, while Tnugdál is able to see the sinners in the lower hell, they are unable to see him.⁸⁵⁹ While there, Tnugdál himself feels oppressed and almost unable to speak (§11), which stands in stark contrast with the recurring image of singing choirs in heaven and in paradise. The levels of gradation between the places located between the wall of gold and of precious stones are more subtle: at every level Tnugdál sees things never seen before, or which are more extraordinary than before, or he hears music sweeter than before. In §20 the instruments he sees even produce sound without being played.

In *FA* the *fíal glainide* serves the same purpose of signifying gradation: as discussed above, the saints are separated from the *muintir nime* until Doomsday, at

⁸⁵⁶ §9. ‘everyone whom you left behind alive who is under God’s displeasure—it is that which their souls see [ahead], and which is the end which awaits them if they do not repent.’ Cf. Carey, *op. cit.*; Wright, ‘Next-to-Last Things’.

⁸⁵⁷ Grosjean, P., ‘Notes d’hagiographie celtique: Un fragment des *Costumes de Tallaght* et la *Vision de Laisrén*’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 81:1-2 (1963) 251-72, p. 256. Seymour believed that these were the souls of the already deceased (*Irish Visions*, pp. 22-3).

⁸⁵⁸ *Non enim ut Salomon ait, sapientia aut scientia erant apud inferos. Pfeil*, p. 34; *Tnugdál*, p. 135. Cf. Eccl. 9:10.

⁸⁵⁹ §13. *Veni et uide; hoc tamen scito quod lumen his, qui hic deputantur minime lucet. Tu tamen illos uidere ualebis; sed non ualebunt ipsi uidere te. Pfeil*, p. 36; ‘Come and see, but you must know that light does not shine at all for those who are assigned there. You will be able to see them, but they will not be able to see you,’ *Tnugdál*, p. 138.

which time they will be allowed to see the Lord *cen fial*. This veil, however, forms a barrier only for them, and not for the heavenly household, who have, in accordance with their rank, the ability to see through it, with ‘divine vision’.⁸⁶⁰ The veil thus marks the gradation of access to heaven, in this case preventing full contemplation of the Lord before Doomsday. Likewise, in §25, the souls who exist outside the city are separated from it by a *fial teined 7 fial d’aigriud i prímdorus inna cathrach ina fiadnaise*.⁸⁶¹ These two veils are clashing perpetually. The text explains the effect of the noise this generates on different potential hearers, distinguishing between the ‘race of Adam’; the sinners, that is—as I understand it—those who live outside the city; and the household of heaven. The former will be ‘trembling with insupportable fear’ at the sound of the noise of these veils, while the sinners are said to be ‘grieved and troubled’. By contrast, the heavenly household barely hears any of it, and what they hear is ‘as sweet as every music.’⁸⁶² The distinctions indicated by these different reactions to the sight and sound of the veil therefore reflect a relative degree of separation between the hearer and the heavenly household. Such distinctions, ultimately, are less concerned with constructing a coherent geography, than with intimating the eschatological worldview which it embodies.

In the case of *FA*, in which Adomnán hardly appears, such emphasis on the role of the sensory perception and cognition also brings us closer to the visionary experience. Significantly, in this respect, *FA* is the only vision which provides us with a description of the Lord on his throne, even if it is introduced with an inexpressibility topos. In *VT*, where Tnugdál is granted the ability to see the Lord directly and know everything, any real description of the Lord is lacking. In addition, while *FA* and *VT* would seem to agree that contemplation of God in the hereafter before Doomsday is possible at least for some souls, it remains unclear whether there will be an even greater bliss for them after that time, or whether it is imagined that God can be contemplated fully. Although this is a common motif, we may perhaps compare *FA*’s admission that the Lord is indescribable as anything other than a fiery mass with Diadochus’ opinion that the “scriptural promise of the “vision of God” ... does not imply that God will take on a perceptible form, but that the human soul and

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. n. 824.

⁸⁶¹ §27. ‘a veil of fire and a veil of ice before them in the chief doorway of the city’.

⁸⁶² §27. *crith 7 uaman dofúlachta; It toirsig 7 it buaidirtha trá na peathaig; binnithir cach ceól.*

body, endowed with incorruptibility, will live ‘near God’”. Daley further points out that, according to Diadochus, the souls, simply by being in God’s presence, “will experience God’s love and goodness, and so “know” God truly, without ever being able to comprehend what his nature is”.⁸⁶³

Table 21 Hell and Heaven

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	Lóc hán	VT	TPP
4.1.1 Sequence	C	iH	CiH	CiJi	JCH	HC	iHJC	iHJ
4.2 Hell		•	•		•	•	•	•
4.3.1 Heaven	(•)		•	•	•	•	•	(•)
4.3.2 Access to divine presence			•	•	•	•	•	

4.3 The ‘Interim’: Punishment and Purgation

Sed nullus tamen hic locus penitentiae.

—*Visio S. Fursei* §9

We have seen above that those souls who do not gain entrance to heaven or hell upon death and must await the Last Judgement (that is, the not-very-good or not-very-bad) must remain in an ‘interim’—both temporally and spatially. Temporally, we speak of the period between death and the Last Judgement as the interim. Spatially, this term refers to all those places said to be outside or in between heaven and hell, which includes (in modern terms) ‘Purgatory’, and which may or may not include an earthly paradise, as well as any number of other locations. Areas such as the land of the saints, described above, thus exist in an interim temporally, even if their location is placed within the larger bounds of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our modern idea of Purgatory was not formally established until the Second Council of Lyons (1274 AD), though, as we have seen, ideas concerning places of ‘punishment’ after death existed from an early date. The means by which we distinguish Purgatory are twofold and consist, first, of the notion that the soul may be *purged* of sins, which it has not (or not completely) repented during life, post-

⁸⁶³ Daley, *The Hope*, p. 119. Daley further writes that Diadochus believed that “In the time before the resurrection, the souls of the just will enjoy this divine presence in only a limited way, since they will be deprived of a part of their natural constitution”, which will be restored at the Resurrection.

mortem in a location separate from heaven or hell.⁸⁶⁴ Second, that this purgation directly affects the soul's interim status and may affect its early release and acceptance into heaven.

In the Early Christian period, it was held that punishment after death is eternal, but Origen already raised some objections to this view and professed himself unsure whether souls, after death, could not be released before Doomsday. He appears to have considered post-mortem punishment to be of 'long-duration' rather than 'unending' and to be medicinal and corrective.⁸⁶⁵ A few centuries later, Augustine was convinced that some of the souls which are punished immediately after death will be released before the Last Judgement. He insisted, however, that this punishment is only a hint of the final, eternal state of being after Judgement and Resurrection.⁸⁶⁶ Jerome, on the other hand, did not wish to speculate on punishments in the interim, but believed that all Christians (good and bad) will have their works tried and purged in fire, as per 1 Cor 3:13, and receive mercy.⁸⁶⁷ By the middle of the sixth century, Caesarius of Arles (†543 AD) seems to have taken it for granted that minor sins could be purged away at the Last Judgement,⁸⁶⁸ referring to a purgative fire (*purgatorius ignis*). Up to this point in time, references to such a fire were normally understood to refer to the fire of Judgement Day, not to an 'interim' fire. The idea of penance was confined to the living.⁸⁶⁹

According to Gregory the Great, however, 1 Cor 3:13 could refer both to the suffering in this life and to that in the next. Building on Augustine's cautious position that *some* type of purging may be possible for a middling group of souls, he suggested that certain minor faults may be cleansed *before* the Last Judgement.

⁸⁶⁴ As discussed by Charles Wright ('Next-to-Last Things'), *contra* Le Goff, J., *La naissance du purgatoire* (Paris, 1981), Transl. Goldhammer, A., *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, 1984), this place may or may not be defined, but its perceived existence is not contingent on its identification with a specific place. Likewise, Le Goff's theory that the concept of purgatory could not exist without the existence of the noun 'Purgatory' is now considered discredited.

⁸⁶⁵ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 54-7; McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 47.

⁸⁶⁶ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 237-8; McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 49.

⁸⁶⁷ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 103ff.; McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 48; Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 94. 1 Cor 3:13: *Uniuscuiusque opus manifestum erit: dies enim Domini declarabit, quia in igne reuelabitur: et uniuscuiusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit* 'Every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.'

⁸⁶⁸ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 207-9; McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 51; Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', pp. 94-5; Dunn, M., 'Gregory the Great, the Vision of Fursey and the Origins of Purgatory', *Peritia* 14 (2001) 238-54, p. 242; Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, pp. 83-4.

⁸⁶⁹ Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, pp. 105-6.

Hence, Gregory advocates the benefit of intercession for the souls of the dead.⁸⁷⁰ It is therefore not until the seventh century, during which also some of the earliest, brief visionary accounts appear, that the concept of cleansing one's sins, and the notion of a *purging* rather than a punitive fire, in the *interim* first begin to develop. The earliest text here discussed, *VF*, falls exactly in this period. However, scholarly opinion is divided about exactly when and how fast this development took place. The date of the *Dialogi*, in particular of book four, is still disputed and it has been suggested that it should be dated somewhat later, to the 670s AD.⁸⁷¹ The issue is not yet resolved, but other contemporary works, such as Columbanus' sermons, Jonas' *Life of Columbanus*, and the *Visio Baronti* all contain more conservative statements, associating purgation in the hereafter with Doomsday rather than with an immediate state of purgation.⁸⁷² That this was a period in which attitudes to death, sin and penance were fluctuating in an attempt to come to terms with precisely these questions has been argued by Peter Brown, who suggested that seventh-century concerns regarding a doctrine of purgation "may best be seen in terms of the inconclusive juxtaposition" between an emphasis on "the eventual purgation of the soul after death" and "God's exercise of His sovereign prerogative of mercy"; nonetheless he argues for an increasing "peccatisation" of society at this time.⁸⁷³ Thus, the rising popularity of tariffed penance—a system which allowed for repeated, private penance for one's sins accompanied by fixed, temporary punishments—in preference to public penance, has been repeatedly credited as a factor in paving the way for measured or temporary post-mortem purgation.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁷⁰ Esp. *Dial.* §§ 29, 40-2, 56-9. Daley, *The Hope*, p. 214; McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 52; Dunn, 'Gregory the Great', pp. 243-5.

⁸⁷¹ This argument was first advanced by Clark, F., *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 2 vols., Studies in the History of Christian Thought 37-8 (Leiden: Brill, 1987). M. Dunn reviews the arguments in her 'Gregory the Great' (pp. 239-40, 246-7, 253, and nn. 5) and agrees with Clark that both the absence of any reference to the more innovative parts of book four in contemporaries such as Isidore of Seville or Tajo of Saragossa, and its the innovative eschatology, suggest a somewhat later date. In addition, she suggests an Anglo-Saxon, possibly Northumbrian, origin for the work, against Clark's suggestion that the work is a hybrid likely written in Rome. The case remains to be resolved.

⁸⁷² Dunn, 'Gregory the Great', pp. 249; Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 126.

⁸⁷³ Brown, P., *The End of the Ancient Other World: Death and Afterlife Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Tanner Lectures on Human Values (Yale: University of Utah Press, 1996), p. 53; and *ibid.*, 'The Decline of the Empire of God: Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages', in Bynum, C. W. and P. H. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), pp. 41-59, p. 46.

⁸⁷⁴ The influence of tariffed penance, and in particular, the role of the Irish in its dissemination is argued by Dunn, 'Gregory the Great', pp. 247-9 and Brown, 'The End', pp. 67-9, and 'The Decline', pp.

However, Moreira has cautioned that repeated penance had a much longer history and that there is a major difference between the two in that penance may be granted for all sins, whereas there is never any suggestion that major sins may be forgiven in the afterlife.⁸⁷⁵ Despite the suggestions in Gregory's work that intercession may effect the soul's early release, it would appear that the notion of a measured, post-mortem purgation taking place immediately upon death was not explicitly established until the eighth century, in the works of Bede and Boniface; and that a differentiation of torments was not depicted in vision literature until the ninth.⁸⁷⁶ These developments, however uncertain, are reflected in greater and lesser degrees in the key texts.

The *VF* provides very little information on the geography of the afterlife in general, but one might say Fursa remains in an interim area for the entire duration of his journey. The aerial location to which he is taken appears to be behind a fiery barrier, in which the devils reside and wage war, and in which a former acquaintance of his is burning (§§8, 9, 16). Though the location is not described any further, it has previously been suggested that this fire is a purging fire, implying that the afterlife, as described in this text, provides opportunity for the purging of sins.⁸⁷⁷ This question, indirectly, actually informs a good deal of the text, and certainly most of Fursa's vision, which is primarily concerned with sin, penance and the soul's fate in the hereafter. Its answer centres primarily on two scenes in the text, namely, the dialogue between the angel and the devil (§§6-9), and the episode concerning the sinner thrown at Fursa upon his departure (§16).

In the war of words that ensues between the devils and the angels upon Fursa's arrival the devils attempt to defend their entitlement to a sinful soul. The Devil's main argument is that a man who has 'consented to a sinner', or committed sins not yet expiated in life, should be damned.⁸⁷⁸ Given that Fursa, he argues, has sins left unrepented, the Lord ought to be righteous and give him his due. The angel

52-3. Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, pp. 136-9, 140-1, and Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 129, are more sceptical.

⁸⁷⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁸⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 145 and chapter 6.

⁸⁷⁷ Dunn, 'Gregory the Great', p. 249.

⁸⁷⁸ §6. *Contradicente aduersario ac blasphemante iniustum esse deo hominem peccatori consentientem nihil damnationis habere.*; §9 (*Procacissimus daemon dixit*): "...omne delictum quod non purgatur super terram, in caelo esse uindicandum promisit ... Hic homo non purgavit delicta sua in terra, nec uindictam hic recipit. Ubi est ergo iustitia dei?"

contests this on the grounds that one will not perish over ‘lesser sins’ and that ‘as long as repentance is hoped for, divine mercy doth attend mankind’.⁸⁷⁹ When the Devil points out that there is, however, no *locus paenitentiae* in the afterlife, he is contradicted by the angel, who asserts that perhaps there may be.⁸⁸⁰ Marilyn Dunn has interpreted this conversation as evidence that post-mortem purgation was advocated in the text.⁸⁸¹ As Moreira and Wright have since pointed out, however, in this conversation the angel deliberately deceives the Devil. Moreira considered this trickery a dramatic tool in the narrative, by means of which the angel sidesteps the truth to protect Fursa.⁸⁸² Yet, as Wright argues, the deception is more subtle: the Devil is simply unaware—and the angel neglects to inform him—that Fursa has not actually died but has merely come as a visitor, and proceeds on that assumption. Thus, even if one counts the burn Fursa receives later in the narrative, there is still no question of *post-mortem* purgation.⁸⁸³ In fact, as long as Fursa is alive, there is indeed still hope for *paenitentia*, and so the angel spoke the truth regarding Fursa’s entitlement to God’s mercy, just as the Devil spoke the truth when he stated there is no place of penance in the afterlife.

While the devils do not manage to wring Fursa from the angels, neither does he escape the afterlife unscathed. Upon his departure he is scalded by a sinner thrown at him by the devils, one who had bequeathed his garments to Fursa upon his death. The man was apparently burning in the flames, because he had not fully repented, as Fursa mistakenly seems to have believed, but the text does not tell us whether this man is there temporarily, whether he is being punished or purged, or whether he is perceived to be in hell or in an interim location. For more details concerning the fire itself one must turn back to §8, where Fursa is asked to look down at the world below him. The description of these fires belongs to a separate section in the narrative, interrupting the battle scene. When Fursa looks down, he sees a dark valley beneath him and four fires. When he is unable to answer the

⁸⁷⁹ §7 (*Sanctus angelus dixit*): “*Nisi principalia protuleris crimina, propter minima non peribit.*”; §9 *Quamdiu speratur penitentia, comitatur homini diuina misericordia.*”

⁸⁸⁰ §9 *Satanas respondit*: “*Sed nullus tamen hic locus penitentiae.*” *Angelus respondit*: “*Profunditatem mysteriorum dei ignoratis: fortasse etenim erit.*”

⁸⁸¹ Dunn, ‘Gregory the Great’, p. 249; she repeats this position in Dunn, M., *The Vision of St. Fursey and the Development of Purgatory*, Fursey Occasional Papers (Norwich: Fursey Pilgrims, 2007), pp. 18–20 (the paper was presented in Norwich, on January 15th, 2005).

⁸⁸² Moreira, *Heaven’s Purge*, p. 120.

⁸⁸³ Wright, ‘Next-to-Last Things’.

angel's question as to what these are, the latter explains to Fursa that these are the four fires that burn up the world (*qui mundum succendunt*). When speaking of these fires, the author is no longer speaking of individual punishment, but of a world-wide or, if you will, cosmological, fire. As argued above, in this particular scene, Fursa looks down on the world and sees it, quite literally, from a heavenly perspective: from here, the earth looks dark and fiery, increasingly consumed with sins. Ultimately, the fires will burn up the world, the threat of which is suggested when the fires flare up towards Fursa. This is not a coincidence: the four fires are named after the sins of Falsehood, Avarice, Dissension and Mercilessness. The implication, it seems to me, is that this is what fuels them, i.e. that which they burn away. Thus the angel explains:

secundem merita operum singulos examinat, quia uniuscuiusque
cupiditas in isto igne ardebit. Sicut corpus ardet per illicitam
uoluntatem, ita et anima ardebit per debitam poenam⁸⁸⁴

This fire thus burns up the world, but also individual souls. What the description is referring to, therefore, appears to be the equivalent of the fire of Doomsday from 1 Cor 3:13—almost as if it represented a ‘flash-forward’ to Doomsday itself. Its interpretation as a fire of punishment and damnation is confirmed by the text itself: *ardebit per debitam poenam*. When referring to Fursa's fate, the Devil speaks of punishment (*uir iste poenarum expers non erit* §10) vengeance (*uindicta* §9) and damnation (*damnationis* §6, *dammandus erit* §9), never of purging or cleansing. In addition, Carozzi has stressed the baptismal aspect of the fires: the text refers specifically to the punishment of sins committed after baptism (§8).⁸⁸⁵ The significance of the passage in §16, however, lies in the fact that the fire also appears to be the fate of souls immediately after death. The text specifies the duration of punishment only in general terms—it will be equal in measure to your merits—but there is no indication that it might lead to an early release. It does not, therefore, follow that the four fires are those of a ‘purgatory’ in any sense of the word.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸⁴ ‘[the fire] tests each one according to the merits of his works, because the avarice of each and every one shall burn in this fire. Just as the body burns due to unlawful desire, so shall the soul burn because of due punishment.’

⁸⁸⁵ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, pp. 120-3.

⁸⁸⁶ Carozzi, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-2, cautiously argues that it is a purgatorial fire.

Fursa's journey, and his burn in particular, can however be seen as an unusual mixture of (pre-emptive) punishment and penance. He is tried for his sins—presented as accusations—as if he were really dead and given immediate punishment. However, suffering this burn allows him to return to his body cleansed of his sins, now a 'just' person, like a sinner who has completed his penance.⁸⁸⁷ The result of this ordeal is a lasting mark on his *physical* body, serving as a lesson learned for posterity. The function of this particular episode is surely educational, aiming to encourage the living to do penance for their sins to avoid the fires of the afterlife. Such is exactly the message the angel imparts to Fursa at this point. Thus, the only form of 'purgation' in the afterlife the text *explicitly* condones is that resulting from a temporary visit to the afterlife, such as that undergone by Fursa, which serves as an example of the punishments prepared for sinners in the hereafter.⁸⁸⁸

In *VL* we find much that is similar. Here too, devils claim to 'have a portion in' Laisrén (*cuid duib isin fer-sa*) and begin pleading a long plea against him (§5). As Wright points out, the language used underscores the legal overtones of the debate.⁸⁸⁹ In this case we are not told what Laisrén is accused of, other than that it concerns sins which he had not previously confessed, which is, of course, contested by the angel. As in *VF*, the Devil, referring to Matt. 18:3, argues that 'if the word of God be true' (*mad fír briathar Dé*) Laisrén shall not be allowed to enter (§6). However, at this point the angel points out that the word of God still holds true because Laisrén has only come there to visit. The *VL* is thus explicit in a way that *VF* is not and there is no ambiguity regarding Laisrén's status.

The more difficult aspect of the text concerns the group of souls lamenting in the valley. The valley is described as the doorway of hell (*dorus an ifirn*), and leading up to it is a great cave, functioning as its *erportach*. We have already come across this term in *SnR*, where it indicates the porticos of the heavenly city.⁸⁹⁰ An

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, pp. 124-5, 136.

⁸⁸⁸ Bede's later version of the account omits the greater part of the text and focuses primarily on the four fires. He appears to be most interested in the purgatorial aspect of the vision, which fits well with his own ideas of purgation in the afterlife as set out in the vision of Dryhthelm, and in recasting Fursa as a missionary.

⁸⁸⁹ Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'. E.g. the use of the words *tacra(e)*, the legal term for pleading delivered by a lawyer for a plaintiff, and the verb *fris-gart*, to which belongs the noun *frecreae*, the term for a counterplea. Cf. Kelly, F., *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: DIAS, 1988), pp. 191-5.

⁸⁹⁰ See p. 217-8, and n. 798.

equally liminal place is intended here. In a sequence analogous to that observed in the heavenly kingdom, the souls are placed just outside hell, though here they are not in the *erportach*—ostensibly conceived as a type of forecourt—but quite literally placed on the threshold of hell:

Co n-acadar fochlui mar amal bid beolu uama ... Tiagait isin uaim
cein mair co rrancatar sliab mar n-ard ndub ara ciund for belaib an
ifirn 7 gleann mar i n-ochtur an tslebi-sin. Edh indus an glenda-sin:
lethan iar n-ichtur, coel iar n-uachtar. Iss ed indsin dano dorus an ifirn
7 a erportach ind uaim.⁸⁹¹

In actual fact, of course, the souls are not even there yet at all: they are still alive on earth.⁸⁹² The angel specifies that this is the fate that awaits them if they do not mend their ways.⁸⁹³ Laisrén's vision of these souls is thus an example of a visual representation of 'realised eschatology', in that "by their attitude to Christ's word [these souls] ... already pass judgement on themselves".⁸⁹⁴ However, it is unclear what exactly their position in the valley implies. Is it merely a symbolic representation of their current sinful path, which can only lead them into hell upon death? Or does the text mean to imply that those who do not repent will be placed in the valley itself upon death, in order to await their entrance to hell on Doomsday, like the souls in torment in *FA*? In short, does the text suggest that unrepentant souls go straight to hell or remain in an interim location?

The angel describes a different fate for those souls who do repent in their lifetime: provided one ends one's life on good terms, *ni bia asinn luc-sa acht biaid i lluc didanta ond ulc-sa 7 na mbera a aithrige secha*.⁸⁹⁵ It seems to me that this phrase suggests that souls initially spend time at the *loc didanta*, and subsequently, presumably at Doomsday, receive salvation and are thus 'carried beyond it', to

⁸⁹¹ §8 'They saw a great pit, as it were the mouth of a cave ... They go a long way into the cave until they reached a great lofty black mountain, before them at the mouth of hell, and there was a great valley on top of that mountain. This is how that valley was: broad along the bottom, narrow along the top. That, then, is the doorway of hell; and the cave is its porch.'

⁸⁹² The angel identifies them as *cech oen fail i n-etail De a mbethaid dit eis* 'everyone whom you (Laisrén) left behind alive who is under God's displeasure'.

⁸⁹³ Quoted above, p. 231. The text reads *for-accai*, presumably from the otherwise unattested verb *for-accai*, which may mean something like 'see ahead, look forward to'(?). *DIL* s.v. *for-accai*; Carey, 'The Vision of Laisrén', note to §9.

⁸⁹⁴ McNamara, 'Introduction', where he refers to the Gospel of John (John 3:17) as an example.

⁸⁹⁵ §10 '[he] will not be in this place but in a place of consolation from this evil; and his repentance will carry him beyond it.'

heaven. Wright has identified this term as a direct translation of the aforementioned *locus refrigerii*.⁸⁹⁶ Such a notion is suggested also by the following phrase:

Acus dano anti bias i firinde, as betha for-accai cein bis i curp 7 as
betha na mbia mad feidil i firinne.⁸⁹⁷

Here, I take it, the angel is speaking of the righteous; of those who deserve to go to heaven straight after death, on account of having lived a virtuous life. If so, the probability is that by analogy we are likewise to interpret the sinners in hell as the irredeemable who go straight to hell. I therefore agree with Wright that *VL* recognises a four-fold scheme with two groups of middling souls and two groups that are immediately sent to heaven and hell respectively.⁸⁹⁸ However, the text does not give any indication that these middling souls are punished (or purged) in the interim. Rather, they would appear simply to be waiting. This, on the whole, is congruent with the angel's advice to Laisrén, who (like Fursa) is instructed to preach concerning repentance before death (§10) as well as divine mercy (§11). Wright further argues, based on the conversation between the devil and angel quoted earlier, that the deciding factor between the middling groups is confession of one's sins. Yet it must be pointed out that in the angel's advice to Laisrén (§§9-11), the emphasis is consistently on penitence (*aithrige*) rather than on confession (§§4-5, *coibais*).⁸⁹⁹ With this apparent emphasis on the completion of penitence the text addresses the core of contemporary debates concerning the afterlife: what happens to those who have not finished their penance before death?

A concern for the importance of penance equally underpins much of *Red. VI*. As noted above, there is still considerable uncertainty about the nature of the places of torment in the text. Carozzi hesitantly opined that the text describes purgatorial punishments.⁹⁰⁰ And, as discussed above, Moreira has previously argued that one might perceive ambiguity in the text regarding the nature of the punishments, which may have led the scribe of *StG^I* to re-interpret them as purgative rather than punitive.⁹⁰¹ The text itself opens with the statement that Paul went to see *poenas*

⁸⁹⁶ Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things'.

⁸⁹⁷ And the one who is in righteousness sees life [ahead] as long as he is in the body; and he will have life if he is constant in righteousness.'

⁸⁹⁸ *Op. cit.*

⁸⁹⁹ *Op. cit.* Admittedly, the two go hand in hand.

⁹⁰⁰ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, pp. 111-2.

⁹⁰¹ Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, pp. 132-4.

peccatorum ('the punishments of sinners'). This is reiterated in the description of the sinners in §5, who are *in paenas ualidas* ('in mighty punishments').⁹⁰² In addition, the formulaic structure of the text suggests a clear distinction between penitence and punishment. The formulae at the end of each paragraph contains the reproach that the sinners *paenitentiam non egerunt* ('did not do penitence')—or in the second half, *numquam paenituerunt*—and that consequently they suffer (*propriam*) *paenam* (§2, 3, 8) or *mala* (§4, 5). The text thus clearly distinguishes between *paenitentia*, which the souls should have committed in their lifetime, and the *paena* which they suffer in the afterlife. Only in §6, in which two additional paragraphs have been inserted, do we read that the souls pay with *mala paenitentia uel graue pænæ* ('bad penance or grave punishment'). In the context this paragraph, in which the angel clearly states that *paenitentia* must be done during life (*dum aduixerit*),⁹⁰³ the phrase can only refer to the two-fold solution to sinning: either one repents and submits to penance (*paenitentia*) or one suffers the consequences in the afterlife (*graue pænæ*). To my mind, there is nothing in the text which suggests that any type of purging or atonement may take place after death. While this does not solve the issue of the location of punishment discussed above, it does cast further doubt on the relevance of the title in *StG*^l to the text as it stands, as queried by Moreira. Indeed, the title makes most sense particularly in relation to the two additional paragraphs in §6, which may have been of greatest interest to the scribe.⁹⁰⁴

The position of *Red. XI* on punishment and purgation is arguably somewhat harder to ascertain, not least because, as its latest editor points out, there is notably ambiguity in §5, regarding one of the few sentences which appears to explicitly comment on the punishments. O'Sullivan considers the possibility that the punishments may be purgatorial based on the angel's phrase that the sinners *non deficient et percolent proprias poenas*, which may be translated as 'they shall not pass away and shall pass through the proper punishments' or as 'they shall not fail/disappear/be wanting' and 'they shall cultivate/complete/fulfil their proper

⁹⁰² In addition, in §5 the verb *aguntur* is replaced by *torquentur* in *Le*, again highlighting the punitive nature of the punishments.

⁹⁰³ Cf. above, p. 112.

⁹⁰⁴ One might also question whether these paragraphs could not have been added by said scribe. Whilst there is nothing in the Latin particularly to suggest this, I would not go so far as to rule it out.

punishments'.⁹⁰⁵ What we may take from this reference, at the very least, is, like in *Red. VI*, the emphasis on *paena*; as is also the case in §4 and 11, where the angel announces to Paul that he will show him the 'punishment of the wicked' (*paenam impiorum*), and in the harsher *et non sunt mortua animas earum propter poenas impiorum*.⁹⁰⁶

O'Sullivan further points at the consistent emphasis on mercy in this text as an indication the punishments may be purgatorial, yet the emphasis is on mercy as a (human) virtue and not as a quality of the Lord as Judge, as envisioned by, for instance, Peter Brown.⁹⁰⁷ In addition, the text refers specifically to faults committed by the suffering souls *in their lifetime*; and likewise, on the absence of penance completed during life.⁹⁰⁸ Conversely, the virgins in §9 are praised for not speaking lies in their lifetime.⁹⁰⁹ The text thus focuses specifically on the evaluation of the person's sinful or virtuous behaviour during life. This is contrasted with the punishments and rewards which they merit in the afterlife on account of their behaviour. As in *Red. VI*, the text appears to advocate a distinction between sinning and atonement in life, and punishment for one's sins in the hereafter.

Nevertheless, the text's rather complex and slightly disjointed four-fold structure offers a plurality of afterworld locations, even if the exact location of the punishments remains uncertain. Paul of course arrives in the third heaven at the start of the text, yet it does not leave the impression that the fiery furnaces are located in the heavens. Unfortunately, the only opaque reference to a punitive interim in the text would appear to have been misspelled in the manuscript; it is edited as *locus [in]iustorum* (§11).⁹¹⁰ As discussed above, there is no doubt that the author believed in an interim in temporal as well as in spatial terms in the form of a paradise, so that the notion of a *locus iniustorum* would not be outside the theoretical scope of the text.

⁹⁰⁵ *Op. cit.*

⁹⁰⁶ 'and their souls have not died on account of the punishment of the wicked', §11.

⁹⁰⁷ Most recently in Brown, 'The Decline'.

⁹⁰⁸ E.g. in §3 *qui non fecerunt elimosinas in uita eorum*; §7 *episcopus qui non uerba recta fecit in uita ... nec ieiunia in uita sua gerebat*; §8 *et uerba ueritatis non referebat in uita sua ... nec benignitatem nec orationem nec uigilia nec ieiunium in uita sua habuerat*; §11 *et cong[r]uerunt [in] eas in uita earum*; and §5 *et non egerunt penitentia[m]*.

⁹⁰⁹ and in §9 *nec mendaci[a] dixerunt in uita earum*.

⁹¹⁰ A similar error occurs in *StG^L* §31: *...et ostendam tibi animas iustorum et peccatorum*; for *P* (and *Escorial* and *Anrhem*) *animas impiorum*. Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 136.

In *FA* the interim is expressed in multiple ways: as discussed above, *FA* recognises various gradations of punishments in hell, as well as a *refrigerium* and a land of saints, all of which, however, are considered temporary (§§49-50). In spatial terms too, the land of saints may be considered an interim location—albeit one in close proximity to heaven—in the same way that hell is presented as an interim location close to the land of the devils, where the souls will reside after Doomsday. But *FA* equally has interim locations more true to the word. These may include even the silver-walled island in the river of fire containing souls protected the fire by their alms (§46), which, though located within hell, arguably represents a state which is neither that of punishment, nor of reward. In a truly neutral interim state, a number of souls dwell “unsteadily and fleetingly, in heights and in hills; in rushy places and in bogs” until the Day of Judgement (§25). They are located just outside the heavenly kingdom, and separated from it only by crashing veils.⁹¹¹ They are therefore the only group mentioned which is neither a part of heaven or hell. Their interim position is highlighted by the fact that the guardian angels of each soul are still ministering to them (§26): their fate is not decided until Judgement Day, though one may also perhaps infer from this that they may still hope for salvation. As Wright has pointed out, their position is a true interim both in spatial terms and in terms of the absence of punishment or reward.⁹¹² The eschatological landscape of *FA* is thus one which is perhaps best imagined as a polar axis: at each end, the polar opposites of heaven and hell form the nucleus of their own hemisphere, in relation to which the souls are placed. The linear conception of the afterworld that can thus be discerned behind the more apparently disjointed account of heaven and hell in *FA*, also evident in its representation of the journey of the soul towards its Creator, is a theme that becomes noticeably more common in eschatological literature from the tenth (perhaps even the ninth) century onwards and which has strongly influenced both *VT* and *TPP*.

The emphasis on the relationship between sins and the punishments owed for them, evident in the preceding visions, is present also in *FA*, though it is not commented on as explicitly or as often. The text is concerned almost exclusively with

⁹¹¹ Cf. above, p. 232.

⁹¹² Wright, 'Next-to-Last Things', “they are suspended in a truly intermediate condition that is neither celestial nor infernal, one characterised by attenuation of punishment and deferral of reward”.

the rewards (*fochraici*) of the righteous, punishments (*píana*), and torments (*todérnama*) of the sinners.⁹¹³ The connection between sin and punishment is expressed primarily in the description of the punishments in §§41-8⁹¹⁴ and in the souls' ascent through the seven heavens. The latter section is the only place in which the concept of purgation has some bearing. The souls are received by the virgins at the gate of the first heaven for their *cétaitbher* ⁊ *cétchésad* ('first reproach and first suffering', §31). In the second heaven, in the only instance of actual purgation in the text, the righteous souls are then cleansed from the guilt which adheres to them by a fiery stream.⁹¹⁵ There is also a well, in which both the righteous and the sinful are washed, but while it soothes the righteous,

ingreinnid immorro ⁊ loiscid anmanna na pecthach ⁊ ní dingaib ní díb
acht is tuilled péine ⁊ pennaite ros tá ann.⁹¹⁶

The phrase is an interesting one in that it mentions both punishment and penance, yet makes it crystal clear that no actual remission of guilt will be allowed as 'nothing is removed' from these souls. In anticipation of the immediate judgement which follows in this section of the text, the souls are examined and sorted upon arrival: the righteous are washed and prepared for heaven; the sinners punished and prepared for hell. This section, originally independent and inserted here in between the sections on heaven and hell, does not anticipate either an interim period or an interim location, other than the journey to the Creator itself. Once judgement is passed, the soul is sent to either heaven or hell for eternity (*tria bithu sír* §§37-8), with no indication that the souls have yet to wait for Doomsday.

In *VT*, arguably the most structured of all the visions discussed here, the 'interim' area is as complex as its concepts of hell and heaven. In spatial terms the interim encompasses at the very least everything from the first high wall to the wall of gold. At the first wall, on the side facing the lower hell, *Tnugdál* finds men and women enduring wind, rain, sadness, hunger and thirst; but who are in the light and out of the

⁹¹³ E.g. *fochraice* §§8, 9, 54-7, 61-63; *píana* (*péine*) §§ 8, 12, 43, 48, 64 and *todérnama* §§ 36, 53, 61.

⁹¹⁴ On which see further below, in 4.3.1.

⁹¹⁵ §32, in *sruth derbas* ⁊ *niges anmanna na noem dín chutrumma chinad nos lenann co rroichet comglaine* ⁊ *comsoillse fri étrochta rétlann* 'the stream which assays the souls of the righteous, and cleanses them from the amount of guilt which adheres to them, so that they attain to the same purity and brightness as the radiance of stars'.

⁹¹⁶ §32, 'It afflicts and burns the souls of the sinners, however, and does not remove anything from them; but it is an increase of punishment and penance which they have in it.'

stench.⁹¹⁷ This location is also described as ‘the turning-point of power of the Most High’.⁹¹⁸ The angel informs us that these are the *mali non ualde*; they will suffer there for a number of years (*per aliquot annos*) before they will be brought to a *requiem bonam*.⁹¹⁹ Thus it would seem that these souls are able to move on to a better place after paying their debt.

On the other side of the wall is the *campus laetitiae*, a beautiful, fragrant, flowery meadow, where the sun does not set, and which holds the fountain of life (§15).⁹²⁰ We are told that this is the resting place (*requies*) of the *boni non ualde*, who have been saved from the pains of hell, but who *nondum merentur sanctorum consortio coniungi*.⁹²¹ By means of illustration of the souls which are allowed to reside there we find the Kings Donnchad and Conchobar and with King Cormac (§§16-7). They are examples of souls who have committed sins and repented, but who have not yet paid for all of their sins. Thus, Kings Donnchad and Conchobar each repented of their cruel and violent lifestyle before death, so that it is no longer held against them as a sin.⁹²² King Cormac, on the other hand, has paid for all his sins, except two (adultery and oath-breaking), so that as a consequence he is made to suffer fire up to his waist while wearing a hair-shirt from the waist up for .⁹²³ There is no indication, however, that this is a temporary situation and that Cormac will be able to pay for these sins through suffering in the afterlife. Instead the angel says that Cormac *passus est ... et cottidie patitur [et adhuc patietur]*.⁹²⁴

⁹¹⁷ *et infra murum ex illa parte qua ipsi uenerant. erat plurima multitudo uirorum ac mulierum. pluuiam ac uentum sustinentium. Et illi erant ualde tristes famem et sitim sustinentes; lucem tamen habebant. et fetorem non sentiebant.* Pfeil, pp. 41-2; ‘and on the near side of the wall ... there was a very large multitude of men and women enduring wind and rain. They were very sad, suffering hunger and thirst, but they had light, and they did not smell the stench.’ *Tnugdál*, p. 141.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.* Cf. Ps 76:11 *haec mutatio dexteræ Excelsi* ‘this is the change of the right hand of the most High’.

⁹¹⁹ §14. Pfeil, p. 42; *Tnugdál*, p. 141.

⁹²⁰ *uiderunt campum pulchrum. odoriferum. floribus insitum. lucidum et satis amenum; in quo erat multitudo animarum. quam dinumerare nemo poterat. Et erat illa multitudo uirorum ac mulierum exultantium; et nox ibi non fuit. neque sol illic occidit. et est ibi fons aque uiue.* Pfeil, p. 42.

⁹²¹ Pfeil, p. 43; ‘do not yet merit to be united to the communion of saints’, *Tnugdál*, p. 142.

⁹²² *ante mortem penituerunt ... ideo non eis imputatur ad culpam.* Pfeil, p. 43.

⁹²³ *Ideo ignem patitur usque ad umbilicum, quia legitimi coniugii maculauit sacramentum; et ab umbilico sursum patitur cilicium, quia iussit comitem interficere iuxta sanctum Pacricium. et prevaricatus est iusiurandum. Exceptis his duobus, cuncta eius crimina sunt remissa.* Pfeil, p. 46. Of course technically, the second incident consists of two sins, namely complicity to murder as well as oath-breaking, but the phrase suggests to me that it is the latter sin the author had in mind.

⁹²⁴ *[et adhuc patietur]* is missing in the Windberg codex but present in most other manuscripts. ‘he suffered, and he suffers every day, and he will still suffer’, *Tnugdál*, p. 145.

The *campus laetitia* is also walled off, now with a wall of silver, behind which Tnugdál finds another meadow, which is where the faithful spouses reside (§18). Its inhabitants are said to be dressed beautifully, without blemish, joyful, harmonious and many other good things.⁹²⁵ The angel explains that they who respect the sacrament of marriage in life will deserve this place in death.⁹²⁶ They are not, however, at their final resting place, as their fate is not officially decided until the Last Judgement. Indeed, as de Pontfarcy as previously argued, if one looks at the interim status of souls in temporal terms, the souls in the superior hell must also be included in the interim, since they too still await judgement.⁹²⁷

In spatial terms, this three-fold structure expands into multiple locations. In her discussion, de Pontfarcy already pointed out that the location behind the wall of silver in fact forms an extension of the *boni* and *mali non ualde*; they may be regarded as the ‘good’, who are in turn superseded by the ‘very good’. This leads her to propose a six-fold structure in terms of the categorisation of souls, namely the very bad, the bad, the *mali non ualde*, the *boni non ualde*, the good and the very good.⁹²⁸ I would suggest, however, that this ought to be a seven-fold structure, since the latter group, her ‘very good’, actually expands into two groups, that is, the area enclosed by a wall of gold and that enclosed by a wall of precious stones. These may rather be categorised as the ‘very good’ (or ‘perfect’) and the heavenly household. With the exception of the single reference to the *mali non ualde* suffering temporarily, de Pontfarcy is right in considering Marcus’ afterlife a “static world”, not a place of purification affected by intercession, but “at worst, a place of expiation and, at best, a place of waiting”.⁹²⁹

In each of the preceding texts there is an all-pervasive awareness of penance or punishment owed for sins committed during one’s life, and in particular, the

⁹²⁵ *Hi uero qui cantabant uiri. et femine erant uestiti candidis uestimentis. et preciosissimis. et erant pulcherrimi sine ulla macula et ruga. iocundi et hylares. gaudentes semper et exultantes; et in laude sancte sempiternae trinitatis perseuerantes. Candor autem uestimentorum sicut nix. recens erat. percussus solis radio. Voces uero diuersae consonantes. quam musicum melos reddebant sonos. Claritas. iocunditas. amenitas. hylaritas. pulchritudo. honestas. sanitas. eternitas. unanimitas. omnibus equalis erat et karitas.* Pfeil, p. 46.

⁹²⁶ *qui bene seruant illud in corpore.* in hac requie gaudebunt sine fine. Pfeil, p. 48; ‘Those who observe it well while in the body will rejoice forever in this resting place’, Tnugdál, p. 147.

⁹²⁷ Tnugdál, p. 60. This perhaps explains why the ‘superior hell’ is never referred to as hell in the text. See above, p. 205.

⁹²⁸ Tnugdál, p. 59.

⁹²⁹ Tnugdál, p. 63.

awareness that if such sins are not atoned for in life, one will suffer the punishments for them in the hereafter. The *TPP* breaks with this view in a significant way. Unlike the previous texts, the tract never pretends to be a vision, nor an otherworld journey: it quite literally professes to be a *tractatus de purgatorio*. The author makes a programmatic statement in his introduction advocating belief in a purgatorial place:

pena tamen post mortem esse dicitur, que purgatoria nominatur, in qua hii, qui in hac uita in quibusdam culpis, iusti tamen et ad uitam eternam predestinati, uixerunt, ad tempus cruciabuntur.⁹³⁰

A similar statement is put in the mouth of Jesus, when he reveals the place of the Purgatory to Patrick: according to Jesus himself, any penitent and faithful person entering the pit will be purged, as well as see the torments of the wicked and the joys of the blessed,⁹³¹ as the Irish had requested of Patrick.

In the vision itself, the archbishops explain to Owein that penance received before death, or at one's death-bed, which has not been atoned for in life, must be repaid through suffering torture in the places of punishment. All those who are being punished will eventually be saved in the end and will come to the place of rest after being purified.⁹³² In addition, they inform Owein that, while no one knows the duration of their stay, masses, psalms, prayer and alms all help to alleviate the torments.⁹³³ It is clear, therefore, that the concept of the afterlife presented in *TPP* was intended as a true Purgatory, in which souls reside temporarily, and in which they may be purged of their sins either through punishment or through intercession, so that they may be freed and move to heavenly realms. The souls' inhabitation of this location is not temporary by virtue of having to wait for the Day of Judgement, such as many of the afterworld locations in the earlier visions, but is temporary as a direct consequence of the amount of guilt it needs to atone for. Consequently, each awaits their own individual release rather than a collective release on Doomsday. In this, the text notably deviates from its predecessors.

⁹³⁰ 'we are however told there is a punishment after death, which is called purgatorial, in which those who have lived in this life with some sins, but are nevertheless just and destined for eternal life, will be tormented for a time', *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 44; *Easting*, p. 122, ll. 41-5.

⁹³¹ Elsewhere in the text this is repeated in slightly different words: *non solum a peccatis omnibus purgaberis, uerum etiam tormenta, que preparantur peccatoribus, et requiem, in qua iusti letantur, uidebis* 'not only will you be purified of all your sins but you will even see the torments which are in store for sinners and the place of rest in which the just rejoice'. *Easting*, p. 128, ll. 288-90.

⁹³² *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 69; *Easting*, pp. 143-4, ll. 856-65.

⁹³³ *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 69; *Easting*, p. 144, ll. 867-71.

4.3.1 Sinning and Atonement

*paenitentiam non egerunt, non publica, non absconsa
propter hoc patiunt[ur] propria pæna*⁹³⁴

—Red. VI §3

In the visions, many of the scenes serve to exemplify a type of sin or punishment. The punishments due for sins committed are depicted graphically, as physical forms of torture, to deter the visionary and his (future) audiences from committing the same sins. This was not always the norm: in early writing, punishment was rather depicted as the anguish of a guilty conscience.⁹³⁵ These graphic, physical representations are, however, popularised in the medieval period and become increasingly detailed in the visions, as we may observe here also. The physicality of the punishments applied to the soul does not seem to have posed a problem in the Middle Ages, nor, perhaps, should this surprise us given that the concept of the afterworld journey presupposes the representation of an otherwise intangible afterworld in the form of tangible, physical localities. The theological rationalisation for this phenomenon is that pain is a function of the soul, not the body, and that “the human soul has a concept of the body (*similitudo corporis*)” which suffers in hell.⁹³⁶ I have mentioned already, that, conversely, the status of the soul is often visible on its bodily appearance in the hereafter in the form of stains or blackness. It is the same relationship between soul and body which allows for physical punishments of the (*similitudo corporis* of the) soul, so that the concept of guilt and punishment may be represented in these visions in a communicable fashion.

In the next two sections I briefly present an overview of the range of sins and punishments presented in the texts.⁹³⁷ The analysis reveals the emphasis individual texts place on certain types of offences and punishments; which motifs are

⁹³⁴ ‘[they] did not do penance, not public, not private; because of this they suffer [their] proper punishments’.

⁹³⁵ Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 103ff.; McNamara, ‘Some Aspects’, p. 48.

⁹³⁶ Cohen, ‘The Animated Pain of the Body’, p. 42. She quotes Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 21.3 on pain being a function of the soul.

⁹³⁷ Though there is potentially much fruitful work to be done on the connections between the sins and punishments in these texts and the material preserved in penitential handbooks, canons and like texts, along the lines of the work already carried out by Carozzi in his *Le voyage*, unfortunately this falls outside the scope of the present discussion.

commonly shared; and the increasing tendency to make scenes of punishment more complex and dramatic and to integrate them into the landscape.

4.3.1.1 Sins

Analysis of the types of sins mentioned in the text shows that in general a large portion of these falls into the category of ‘sins of speech’, which includes perjury (*VL*, *Red. VI*, *FA*), oath-breaking (*Red. VI*, *VT*) as well as slander (*VL*). This category overlaps somewhat with that of ‘immorality’, including such sins as consenting to a sinner (*VF*) and lacking forgiveness (*VF*, *Red. IV*), as well as judging false judgements (*Red. VI*, *FA*). Transgression or neglect by those in orders, greed, and theft and are other frequently encountered topics. It is further of note that sins of a sexual nature only occur in *Red. XI*, *FA*, and *TPP* and that the sin of unfaith only occurs in *FA* and *VT*. In this selections the range of sins is largely Biblical, relating to the capital sins in the Decalogue. However, it is notable that sins of speech and immorality are of greater interest than adultery or murder in these texts. Himmelfarb observes a similar trend in the apocalyptic tours of hell and tentatively suggests the reason may be that these sins are invisible, whilst murder is difficult to conceal and sooner dealt with by the law.⁹³⁸

The interest in the transgressions of those in orders, or their failure to live up to their profession, as well as concern for failing to do penance are all expected concerns, both in the context of monasticism and in the context of society as a whole, in which the local clergy serve as mediators of the faith. With respect to individual texts, such concerns speak most clearly from *VF* and the *Redactions*, while *FA* and *VT* have a wider scope. *Red. XI* concerns itself entirely with the monastic sphere. *Red. VI*, on the other hand, includes theft of agricultural implements and destruction of crops (by *uiris et mulieribus*, not clergy). These elements, together with sins from the Decalogue, such as not obeying one’s parents, suggest perhaps a rural monastery, in service of the surrounding community.⁹³⁹

Two texts are largely omitted in this discussion: *VL* breaks off at the start of the description of the punishments, so that we lack most of its description of sin and punishment. *TPP*, by contrast, simply omits any mention of which transgressions the

⁹³⁸ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p. 73. In the apocalypses, however, the two most prevalent sins are sins of a sexual nature and sins of speech.

⁹³⁹ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 279.

sinner's are punished for. In fact, we are not even told what sins Owein himself committed.

Table 22 Types of Sins

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	VT
Sins of speech	§7, 13, 14	§13	§3, 5, 6	§7, 8, 11	§45	§17
Immorality, Dishonesty, Treachery	§6-9		§2-5	§7, 8, 11	§45, 47, 48	§4, 5, 9, 10, 13
Transgressions while in orders			§5	§7, 8, 11	§44, 47	§9
Neglect of clerical or religious duties	§10, 13		§4-6	§7, 8, 11	§44, 47, 48	
Not doing penance or ignoring scripture	§9		§2-9	§5		§13
Greed or Theft	§8-10, 13, 14		§5-8		§44, 45	§6, 7, 8, 13
Sexual (gen.)				§5	§46	§8, 9
-Adultery					§48	§13, 17
-Loss of chastity or virginity				§5, 6		
Murder or violence			§6		§44, 45	§3
Against the Church					§44	
Unfaith					§42, 45, 48	§13
Pride, Dissension, Mercilessness, Envy	§8, 13, 14					§5, 13

As mentioned, a concern with proper behaviour, and especially with atonement, is pervasive in especially in the earlier texts. The *VF* and *Red. VI*—both written on the continent, only about a century apart—each address a similar range of issues, yet it is penance which is the overriding theme. In *Red. VI* sinners are repeatedly reproached for not do penance or giving alms, while in *VF* this concern speaks from the accusations made against Fursa, and from Beoán and Meldán's lecture on the vices and their remedies, in which they caution against overlooking one's vices, whether bodily or spiritual, before suggesting remedies for each vice (§§13-4). As noted, a similar concern pervades *Red. XI*, which however emphasizes the virtues of mercy, piety and kindness, as well as semi-penitential exercise such as fasting, prayer and vigils.

The other recurrent theme is that of the misbehaviour of clergy and the negligence of (religious) superiors. Their harsh treatment in the *Redactions* is mirrored also in *VF* and *FA*. In *Red. VI* (§§5, 6) the clergy are accused of a range of sins, from perjury and greed to losing their chastity, while in *Red. XI* and *FA* they are

accused of feigning devotion. In *Red. VI*, *VF* and *FA* spiritual superiors are also accused specifically of neglecting their charges: these are the *doctores ecclesiae et principes* in *VF*, the godparents in *Red. VI*, and those in orders who had infants entrusted to them in *FA*. *Red. VI* (§5) and *FA* (§44) also each contain passages accusing the clergy of misappropriating the churches' riches for themselves, a theme we also find in *VF*.⁹⁴⁰ Charges against sinful church officials, kings or princes are typical of the texts in the 'Apocalypse of Paul family', but the specific motif of those trusting in riches while neglecting or oppressing widows and orphans, echoed in *Red. VI* §5, is more likely to have come from the *Apocalypse of Peter*.⁹⁴¹

In *FA* lists of transgressions become compounded and even repetitive in a few cases. §§44-5 appear to belong together as a pair, describing two immersion scenes (see below). In the first, among those sinners submerged in fire up to the chin are those guilty of kin-slaying, of ruining the church of God and pitiless superiors. Submerged up to the girdle are those guilty of theft, treachery and violence, but a number of professions are singled out too: these include false judges, witches, satirists, relapsed brigands and preachers of heresy. It would seem that a level of gradation is implied in the grouping here, with the first group being considered more grievous sins: kin-slaying was considered an irredeemable sin according to the 'Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations'.⁹⁴² Yet the second group contains sins equally irredeemably, such as perjury. It seems more likely, then, that the immersion motif was borrowed as a punishment without connecting it in any obvious way with a gradation of sins. The text clearly singles out figures of authority, such as the false judges, superiors, preachers of heresy as well as unbelieving kings, but it also lists less obvious professions, such as dishonest artisans and comb-makers and the witches listed above. A running thread through the majority appears to be transgressions involving deceit in one way or another.

The *VT* takes more or less the opposite approach, arranging its chapters according to types of sins, not unlike a penitential handbook in fact. It includes many

⁹⁴⁰ Carey notes a similar passage in an early Middle Irish homily on the life of the Virgin edited by Caoimhín Breatnach, 'An Irish Homily', §19, pp. 46-7. Carey, 'Fís Adommáin', note to §44,6-8.

⁹⁴¹ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, pp. 123-4. The other texts in the 'family' are the Greek and Ethiopic *Apocalypse of Mary*, the Ethiopic *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Gorgorios*, none of which, to my knowledge, are likely to have had any influence on the early Redactions. The motif combining riches with orphans and widows normally concerns kings and princes in these texts.

⁹⁴² Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, p. 278.

of the sins also mentioned above, such as those feigning devotion (§9). On occasion it exploits this format to include short explanation or ‘lectures’. For instance, in §7, the angel explains to Tnugdál that there is a different punishment for petty or great crimes of theft, unless the petty theft is a sacrilege, or unless it is committed by one in orders. The concept of sacrilege is also explained. In §13, in the lowest part of the lowest hell, where the Prince of Darkness resides, the angel lectures about the misuse of power. The sins mentioned in this vision theoretically ought to become more severe as Tnugdál progresses to the lowest hell, like the torments; yet in the lowest hell, we find—beside those who deny Christ, prelates abusing power, and those who do not repent properly—once again the adulterers, robbers, thieves, and the proud also mentioned in the superior hell. Thus, while there is a clear distinction in the text between those sinners considered irredeemable, and thus already judged, and those who may yet be saved, this distinction does not translate into specific types of sins. Rather the concept explained to Tnugdál in §7, that the punishment depends not only on the type of crime, but on its severity and who committed it, seems to apply. As Marcus writes at the end of §7, overriding the concept of sin and atonement in this text is the notion that the Lord will punish and give mercy according to His will. Of course, this is exactly how Tnugdál is treated; he is told he may escape certain punishments even though he deserves them (§§2, 3, 10). Tnugdál himself is accused of causing scandal, arrogance, adultery and other vices and of being a *filius mortis* (child of death).⁹⁴³ The only sin mentioned that holds back the *mali non ualde* is lack of charity (§14).⁹⁴⁴

4.3.1.2 Punishments

While the relative amount of space accorded to punishments in each text naturally differs, it has long been recognised that their number and complexity are generally an increasingly dominant aspect of this genre (see chapter 1.1.1); this is also largely the trend which we observe here. The punishments in these texts almost invariably include torture by fire or heat (though substantially less so by cold), a reflection of the perception of hell as fiery; by tools and implements, often wielded by devils or

⁹⁴³ *Pfeil*, p. 9; *Tnugdál*, p. 114. The phrase *filius mortis* is the Latin equivalent of Irish *mac báis* ‘son of death’, indicating sinners or those not leading virtuous lives. The opposite, *maic bethad* or *fillii uitae* ‘sons of life’, indicates the blessed and the virtuous. Cf. Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp. 116, n.14.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. *VSP* §24, where those just outside the heavenly city are also lacking in good deeds.

‘torturers’; or torture involving animals. *Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, *FA* and *TPP* have, in addition, taken over the immersion punishment characteristic of the *VSP* family. In *Red. VI*, the repeated mention of pitch and sulphur is easily explained both with reference to the Bible and as the ‘by-products’ of fire. The references to lead should be grouped here also as they are connected with fire in the text. Punishments involving instruments of torture and beasts, besides fire, have a long history in Roman and Western culture and consequently in Christian literature.⁹⁴⁵

Of interest as regards literary development are the (increasingly) numerous punishments involving aspects of the landscape or environment. As the interest in visualising the landscape of the afterlife grows and the imagery becomes more complex, the landscape begins to become part of the punishments. Thus, in *VL* (§13) and *FA* (§44, 46), hell contains a sea of fire in which souls are tormented; in *FA* black rivers and lakes torture the souls attempting to extinguish burning arrows (§48); in *VT* and *TPP* bridges, mountains and valleys alike become places of trial and torment. The exception to the rule is generally the pit or abyss, which tends to be reserved for ‘hell proper’, as in *VT*. While the troublesome *Red. VI*, like the *Apocalypse of Peter*,⁹⁴⁶ cites rather non-descript ‘places’ at which certain punishments take place, *FA*, *VT*, and *TPP*, on the other hand, lay out in detail a landscape in which each element is hostile and potentially (or literally, as for *Tnugdál*) painful to traverse. In addition, this landscape is filled with antagonistic creatures such as devils (or more abstract ‘torturers’) and beasts. Discussing similar material in the apocalypses, Himmelfarb points out that “environmental punishments in general, and fire, rivers, and pits, in particular, appear primarily in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, its descendants, and other relatively late Christian texts”.⁹⁴⁷ She adds that while these punishments are on the increase, hanging punishments, of which we have only one example in the key texts, are becoming less common.⁹⁴⁸ In this respect, and

⁹⁴⁵ For an excellent description of the development of the concept of the afterlife as fiery and filled with torture, as well as the social realities that inspired this imagery, see chapter 2 ‘Of Sons and Slaves’ in Moreira, *Heaven’s Purge*, pp. 39-62. The occurrence of beasts in hell in the apocalypses is discussed by Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, pp. 111, 116-20.

⁹⁴⁶ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, p. 115.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

by borrowing a number of specific motifs, the medieval visions discussed here follow the pattern set out by *VSP*.⁹⁴⁹

Table 23 Punishments

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	VT	TPP ⁹⁵⁰
Fire or Heat	§16		§4, 5, 7, 8	§5, §7-8, 11	§44-47	§3, 6-10	1-6, 9, 10
Tools and Implements		§13	§2, 3, 9		§44-45, 47-48	§3, 4, 6-10	1-6
Devils, agents of torture or animals		§13	§4, 8		§47-8	§4, 6-10	1-8
Immersion			§6	§5	§45		7
Landscape (mountains, valleys, seas)		§13			§45-6, 48	§4-7, 9	2-5, 8
Cold or Ice					§45	§4, 6, 9	4, 8
Pitch, Lead or foul liquids			§3-5, 8, 9			§4	5, 7, 9, 10
Weather (wind, rain)					§45	§4	2, 4, 8
Pit or Abyss							7, 9
Hanging							5

4.3.1.3 Punishment of the Visionary and Like-for-Like Punishment

Sins and punishments, as already hinted above, may or may not form a corresponding pair according to a like-for-like rationale. This feature is already found in the apocalypses, but it is also mentioned by Gregory the Great.⁹⁵¹ It is usually expressed as a punishment involving the offending body part or item, or a symbol for the sin in question. There is naturally a certain level of subjectivity involved in ascertaining this, but I limit myself here to those which are sufficiently clear.

Like-for-like punishments occur primarily in *Red. VI*. A good example is that in §8 concerning the punishment of those who stole horses and mules and other quadrupeds. They are found riding on burning, leaden horses, mules and quadrupeds

⁹⁴⁹ A significant difference would be the role accorded to devils in the medieval visions. They do not appear in the apocalypses, but Himmelfarb (*op. cit.*, p. 121) notes that angels of torture tend to appear in correlation with environmental punishment.

⁹⁵⁰ I refer to the sequence of torments in the narrative, ten in total.

⁹⁵¹ Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, chapter 3. In the apocalypses like-for-like punishment most commonly appear in the form of hanging punishments; Gregory the Great, *Dial.* IV.36.

in the afterlife.⁹⁵² Another, in §3, concerns those guilty of false testimony. They are punished as follows:

linguas foras maxillas foras confixas de tres clauibus bulientes in
oculis ipsorum cum pici et plumbum et betumen et sulphur⁹⁵³

The passage is problematic, but the nails in their jaws and their tongues sticking(?) out clearly indicate the area around the mouth and are thus fitting punishment for a sin of speech. As it happens, this particular example is echoed in both *FA* and *VL*.⁹⁵⁴ Like-for-like punishments were probably originally the primary topic of *VL*. Since it is now incomplete, we only have the example of §13, in which Laisrén asks the angel to clarify for him *decoir na pian* ('the distinction of the punishments'). The angel then begins to explain the following scene:

Ind-í at-chi-siu tra cusna cluib teintidib .i. æs ann-sin naruo menic oc
molad De ł oca bennachad acus a adrad 7 rop menci immurgu oc goi 7
oc gol 7 ac brath 7 ethech 7 rad uabair 7....⁹⁵⁵

As Carey suggests, the phrase *tria tengtha* (through their tongues) has likely fallen out and the implication is evidently that the sinners are punished specifically for sins of speech. Closer to *VL* than *Red. VI* is *FA*, which does have the missing phrase: *Araile, cloí theined triana tengthaib, araile triana cennaib dianechtair*.⁹⁵⁶ The Irish *dianechtair* is here reminiscent of the Latin *foras*. However, the paragraph conflates a number of sins and punishments, so that the like-for-like aspect of this punishment is lost in *FA*.

In *Red. VI* §4 we find men and women boiling in fire and being tortured by their spiritual children, because they neglected their duties as godparents:

⁹⁵² This theme is subsequently also found in *Cáin Domnaig* and *Immram Curaig Uí Corra*. See chapter 2.3.1 above.

⁹⁵³ 'with [their] tongues out, [their] jaws pierced by three nails, boiling in their eyes with tar and lead and pitch and sulphur.' See Appendix E.

⁹⁵⁴ The similarities between these passages has previously been discussed by Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 82; Carey, '*Fís Adomnáin*', note to §45,10-11 and Ó Corráin, 'Can We Prove'.

⁹⁵⁵ 'Those whom you see, then, with the fiery nails [through their tongues]: those are folk who were not frequent in praising and blessing and worshipping God, but they were frequent in lying and wailing and perjury and slander and vainglorious speech and....'

⁹⁵⁶ 'others have nails of fire through their tongues, others through their heads from the outside'.

et excrutientur cumpatri apud cummatris filiolis spiritalis et matrinis
 ... Iste sunt, qui conpatratum fecerunt et non custodierunt.⁹⁵⁷

The text is quite vague about the details, but a similar passage can be found in *FA* §47, which now applied the torment to those in orders:

Noídin oca n-athchuma 7 oca letrad do grés di cech aird. ... Is iat
 immorro na naídin filet oca n-athchuma ind aes gráid .i. it é-sin in
 lucht ro erbad dóib do lessugud 7 níros lesaigset 7 níros cairigset imma
 pecthaib.⁹⁵⁸

How the children in *Red. VI* are meant to wound their godparents is not indicated. Silverstein first suggested that *Red. VI* likely shows the influence of both *VSP* §40 and the *Apocalypse of Peter* §25 (both of which concern abortion and infanticide), but there the children shoot lighting out of their eyes into their mother's eyes, sometimes accompanied by snakes gnawing their breasts.⁹⁵⁹ Both *Red. VI* and *FA*, in which the punishment is hacking and slashing, thus deviate significantly from these models. In addition, in both cases the emphasis is on the sin of spiritual neglect rather than infanticide.

The punishment of immersion in *Red. VI*, *Red. XI* and *FA* must also be considered in the light of like-for-like punishments. This punishment is a compound motif deriving from *VSP* (§31) and one of the most distinctive and influential motifs to transfer from that text into later medieval visions.⁹⁶⁰ It describes four groups of sinners, submerged in a fiery river up the knees, the navel, the lips and the hair, who are guilty of idle disputes after Church, fornication after taking the Eucharist, slander in Church, and plotting against their neighbours respectively. In the example in *VSP* there is an aspect of measure-for-measure to the sins, which is lost in the later medieval texts which borrow this motif. *Red. XI* retains part of the original, such as

⁹⁵⁷ §4. 'and godfathers are tortured alongside godmothers by [their] spiritual children, and foster mothers [likewise](?) ... These are [those], who functioned as godparents and did not watch over [them]'. See Appendix E.

⁹⁵⁸ 'Infants are wounding them and slashing at them perpetually from every side. ... Those whom the infants are wounding, however, are the folk in holy orders, i.e., they are the folk who were entrusted to them for their improvement, and they did not improve them and they did not chastise them for their sins'. Carey further points to a nearly identical passage to that in *FA* in a homily on the life of the Virgin Mary. Carey, '*Fís Adomnáin*', note to §47,7-13; Breatnach, '*An Irish Homily*', §19, pp. 46-7. See also note 940 above. It seems evident that either a copy of *Red. VI* or a copy containing similar motifs must have been available in Ireland, but one cannot rule out that these motifs travelled independently.

⁹⁵⁹ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 84. See also Carey, '*Fís Adomnáin*', note to §47,7-13 and Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, pp. 97-101.

⁹⁶⁰ *ANT*, p. 633.

the link between those immersed up to the navel and the sin of fornication,⁹⁶¹ but in the other three cases different sins have been substituted (though the reference to the Church remains). In *Red. VI* only the graded immersion has been preserved and no attempt is made at identifying four different sins connected to the levels of immersion. The text is, however, severely mangled and it is possible the original scene was no longer understood. In *FA*, finally, only two levels of immersion remain, and, as discussed above, there is no clear evidence that there was gradation of sins. The continuity of the motif thus lies in the punishment itself and here the like-for-like aspect too has been lost.

It is evident at this point that the group *Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, *VL*, *FA* share a common set of like-for-like motifs derived, at some remove, from *VSP*. But examples may also be found in *VT*. For instance, in §7, thieves and robbers, including Tnudgal himself, are made to cross a dangerous bridge with sharp iron nails in it with the object of their theft. Thus, Tnudgal is made to drive a cow across the bridge as punishment for having attempted to steal a cow. In the house of Phristinus, gluttons and fornicators are punished with insatiable appetite and torture of the sexual organs (§8). And likewise, in §9 those in religious orders who fornicated or those who defiled themselves immoderately are subjected to a particularly gruesome series of torments whereby they are eaten by a beast and reborn from it, only to give birth themselves to snakes devouring them from the inside.

In conclusion, a brief note concerning punishment of the visionary is necessary. This is not a feature that is dominant in the group of texts discussed here. In chapter three above I have already discussed that Fursa, Tnudgal and Owein participate more actively in their visionary experience, and experience a significant change as a result of it. Nonetheless, only Tnudgal and Owein are submitted to torture more than once during their visit, and in those cases Owein is usually able to escape almost immediately. Fursa, on the other hand, is only scalded by a sinner on his way out, and never witnesses series of punishments comparable to those in *VT* or

⁹⁶¹ It also preserves the phrase that these sinners are neither hot nor cold: *Red. XI Hii sunt homines qui nec frigidi fuerunt nec callidi; P Neque calidi neque frigidi sunt* (Silverstein and Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul*, p. 136).

TPP. This feature thus appears to be a slightly later development in the genre,⁹⁶² one which may be considered to correlate with the expansion of the geography of the afterlife and with its animation as part of the available array of punishments.

Table 24 *The Interim*

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	VT	TPP
4.4 Other/interim	•	•	?	•	•	•	•
4.5.1 Punishments	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
4.5.2 Like for like		•	•	(•)	•	•	n/a
4.5.3 Of the visionary	•					•	•

* *SVA* and *Lóchán* do not contain material relevant to this category.

4.4 Expectation of Judgement and Salvation

In the introduction to this chapter, I briefly discussed the changing beliefs regarding the salvation of the soul after death. Opinions would appear to have vacillated between the belief that ultimately all souls would be saved⁹⁶³ and the belief that only good Christians would be saved even in the Late Antique period. After the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo's belief that the only the *non ualde boni* would have to wait for the Last Judgement, while the righteous and the irredeemable went straight to heaven and hell respectively, became dominant. We have seen that in our key texts the belief in a spatial and a temporal interim is manifested in the form of distinct locations outside the realm of either heaven or hell. This division naturally presupposes a personal or 'particular' judgement of some sort before the End time. This part of the chapter discusses how each text envisages this 'particular judgement' and its relationship to the Last Judgement.

4.4.1 Personal Judgement and Salvation

Despite the fact that each text describes some form of interim location, only one of the key texts, *FA*, actually describes a traditional judgement scene upon death, namely that of the soul brought before the Lord in the 'seven heavens' section. There is no judgement scene in either of the Redactions, nor in *Lóchán*, which only give an

⁹⁶² The visions discussed here form only a small sample. A larger corpus of visions is required to make a more balanced assessment regarding this development in the genre.

⁹⁶³ This was Origen's view, which was predominant in the East until the council of Nicaea. McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 47; Daley, *The Hope*, pp. 54-7.

account of what is observed, and omit any reference to the soul's departure or its journey. *VT*, which describes those elements in detail, nevertheless omits a judgement scene, even when *Tnugdál* arrives at the household of heaven. This may be explained in part by the fact that the function of his visit is educational: the intention is to return him to his body.⁹⁶⁴ Though *Tnugdál* left his body, he is not, strictly speaking, treated as if he were dead. Yet it seems to me that Marcus attempts to simulate the journey of a deceased soul by orchestrating moments of hesitation or uncertainty regarding *Tnugdál*'s fate. Most notably, at the Gates of Death, the angel abandons him and then rescues him—just in time—from the hands of the Devil, and tells him that he will obtain mercy and not judgement.⁹⁶⁵ The impression left on the reader is that perhaps *Tnugdál*'s fate was not yet determined up to that point, but that a finite decision was reached while *Tnugdál* was left standing at the gates. The text does not comment on the manner in which the Lord decides the fate of a soul, but, in line with its general emphasis on the overriding power of God's mercy, effectively suggests that the Judgement is one of God's mysteries.⁹⁶⁶

The only actual judgement scene then, is found in the section on the seven heavens in *FA*. §§30-8 describe the 'first experiences' of every soul leaving the body.⁹⁶⁷ After the soul is guided through the first five heavens (and, if sinful, has completed its punishment in each heaven), it is carried to the sixth heaven by the archangel Michael, from where the soul is brought to the Angel of the Trinity. Together they bring the soul to the Creator, who judges it; if the soul is found wanting, it is sent to Lucifer, to the depths of hell (§36-8). The text does not mention where the righteous souls go, but no doubt the assumption is that they go to heaven.

⁹⁶⁴ *et quecunque tibi monstrauro, memoriter tene, quia iterum ad corpus tuum debes redire*, Pfeil, p. 11; 'and take care to remember whatever I shall show to you, for afterwards you must return to your body', *Tnugdál*, p. 115.

⁹⁶⁵ *miserecordiam et non iudicium consequeris*, Pfeil, p. 36; *Tnugdál*, p. 137. Cf. James 2:13.

⁹⁶⁶ This is expressed a number of times in the text, e.g. §1 *Set qui non uult mortem peccatoris, cui soli competit, medicinam prestare post mortem, omnipotens, pius et misericors dominus, occulto suo iuditio cuncta bene disponens, etiam istam...* 'But He who does not want the death of the sinner, the only One having the power to dispense the cure after death, the almighty Lord, just and merciful, who organises everything rightly according to his own secret judgement, ...' Pfeil, p. 9; *Tnugdál*, p. 114. It is also criticised by the devils—in a variation on a similar motif in *VF*—who believe that *Tnugdál*, as a sinner, has come to suffer damnation: *O quam iniustus et crudelis est deus, quia quos uult moritificat et quos uult uiuificat, non, sicut promisit, unicuique secundum opus suum et meritum reddit: liberat animas non liberandas et dampnat non dampnandas*, Pfeil, p. 12; 'O what a cruel and unjust God He is, since He brings death to whomever He wants and restores life to whomever He wants but does not reward each according to his works and merits as He promised. He frees souls who should not be freed and damns others who should not be damned.' *Tnugdál*, p. 116.

⁹⁶⁷ §39, quoted at n. 803 above.

In this entire section, the emphasis is on the individual soul's journey and her eventual judgement by the Creator; this stands in contrast to the remainder of the work, in which souls are exclusively treated in groups. However, this judgement scene also raises some questions in the context of the discussion on the particular judgement. The scene here only allows for a division between heaven and hell, without any indication that there is an interim or a 'middle group' of souls, as elsewhere in the text, and without any indication that these souls have yet to await the Last Judgement. While it is presented as a particular judgement, this scene appears (somewhat illogically) to indicate a 'final' judgement.

Given that the image of the judgement scene is associated with the End times, it is perhaps not surprising that explicit judgement scenes such as that in *FA* seem rather rare. However, it is obvious that some type of process must take place in order to determine what happens to the soul upon death. In the visions, two auxiliary judgement motifs present themselves: that of a struggle between angels and devils (*VF*, *VL*); and that of the 'winnowing bridge' (*FA*, *TPP*, and adapted in *VT*).

4.4.1.1 Devils in the Air

When Fursa and Laisrén are taken out of their bodies, they suddenly find themselves in the middle of a battle for their souls. In each case, the Devil attempts to exact a claim over the soul, expressed in *VL* by the phrase that he 'has a portion in' Laisrén (*cuid duib isin fer-sa*). The notion that the devil has the right to exact whatever is due to him and that angels come to defend the soul from devils attacking it has its background in early Egyptian monasticism.⁹⁶⁸ The well-known *Vita Antonii* by Athanasius, for instance, records that Anthony witnessed the Devil's attempts to capture recently departed souls as they rise up past him.⁹⁶⁹ This text also illustrates the "common assumption in late antiquity and early Christianity that the layer of air close to the earth is the dwelling place of demons".⁹⁷⁰ The topos of the Devil's

⁹⁶⁸ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', pp. 115-6.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; *Vita Antonii* §65-6. Translated in White, C., *Early Christian Lives*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 49-50. The text is in *PL* 73:115-94 (incl. notes). Smyth also refers to material in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and to Cyril of Alexandria (†444 AD).

⁹⁷⁰ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 115. This idea, however, can be traced back to the Classical period: Thespesios' destination is not under or on the earth, but in the air between the earth and moon, following a Stoic representation of the air below the moon ("het ondermaanse") as a place of cleansing for dirty souls. Kessels, A.H.M., 'Visioenen in de Griekse Traditie: Er en Thespesios', in Stuij, R. E. V. and C. Vellekoop (eds.), *Visioenen* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1986), pp. 24-53, p. 44.

claims also appears in influential texts as Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* and Gregory the Great's *Homily* 39, while the latter's *Dialogi*, contains several scenes in which angels or devils collect souls at the moment of death.⁹⁷¹ These moments do not usually result in a struggle, however, and the only such instance recorded in the *Dialogi* does not take place in the air, but at the bridge in the afterlife which Stephen is trying to cross.⁹⁷²

As regards Irish material, this topos is usually discussed in relation to Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, which records Columba's many sightings of the departure of souls. As in the *Dialogi*, souls are usually greeted by angels or devils, or sometimes both, with relatively few instances of a struggle.⁹⁷³ In these instances, the episodes are typically resolved briefly, on the basis of the soul's own righteousness, but with the help of angels (III.10) and intercession (III.13). The souls are taken either to heaven or to hell; the text evidently does not allow for interim locations. This model therefore only anticipates a two-fold outcome of the judgement and implies that the soul will either be (mostly) righteous or (mostly) wicked. Yet, the division into three types of departures—that is, escorted by angels, by devils or departure after a struggle—suggests that Adomnán does appear to have believed in the Augustinian three-fold division of souls.⁹⁷⁴ Both Smyth and Nathalie Stalmans take the aerial battles in the *Vita Columbae* to mean that the soul is judged permanently immediately upon death and that therefore prayer for the dead would only be effective for a very brief period following death. Both also point out that there is no formal adjudication in these scenes.⁹⁷⁵ The judgement thus takes place in the struggle itself, based on the soul's own virtue.⁹⁷⁶ In this, it is deliberately distinguished from a formal divine judgement such as that imagined at the End.

These episodes form the background for the events in *VF* and *VL*. From the point of view of Columban theology, we might imagine that Fursa's and Laisrén's

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121; Brown, 'The Decline', p. 44.

⁹⁷² *Dial.* IV.37-8.

⁹⁷³ These include, e.g. *Vita Columbae* III.6, 10, 13. In each case, the angels are victorious.

⁹⁷⁴ Ritari, K., *Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland: Moral Theology in the Lives of Saints Brigit and Columba*, Studia Traditionis Theologiae 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 167-72; Wright, 'Next-To-Last Things'.

⁹⁷⁵ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', pp. 119-20; Stalmans, N., 'Le jugement de l'âme dans la Vie de Columbe', in Carey, J., et al. (eds.), *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 41-8.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', p. 120; Ritari, *Saints and Sinners*, pp. 152-67, esp. p. 167; Wright, 'Next-To-Last Things'.

experiences present an up close and personal interpretation of what Columba saw happening to deceased souls in the sky. In both texts, the devils present themselves in battle-formation, ready to fight for ‘their portion’. In *VL* the battle is fought exclusively verbally and is rather brief. One of the devils makes his plea against Laisrén, but is cut short by one of the angels, who insists that he has no portion in Laisrén (§5) and explains that Laisrén has not come to stay, i.e. he has not come to be judged. In *VF* we have a fuller account, which is not cut short by virtue of the angel neglecting to explain to the devil that Fursa has not come to stay. The battle is both verbal and physical. As mentioned, it is divided into seven sections during which the Devil accuses Fursa, each of which concludes with either a physical or verbal stop: four times the devils and angels fall into a battle and three times the angels call upon the Lord’s judgement.⁹⁷⁷ The structure gives the distinct impression that Fursa is tried for each of these sets of accusations and that each time either the battle or the call for judgement represents a moment of decision.⁹⁷⁸ There is no statement in these cases to suggest that the Lord in fact intervenes, but rather the impression is that the issue is either resolved through battle or deferred to the Lord for consideration. The whole series concludes with a final battle. The angels are, of course, triumphant, but this time it appears that the Lord presides as Judge: *donec iudice domino, triumphantibus angelis contritis deuictisque aduersariis...*⁹⁷⁹ It seems to me that here the text hints at a more traditional judgement scene, which has been conflated with the *topos* of the struggle with devils after death. The resultant scene, however, illustrates precisely what we have seen in the *Vitae Columbae*, namely that the fate of the soul is decided in the struggle, and based on an examination of its faults and merits. Consequently, with Fursa having been found innocent (or at the very least redeemable) *...inmensa claritate uir sanctus circumfusus est, sanctorumque angelorum choris concinentibus.*⁹⁸⁰ The significance

⁹⁷⁷ On one occasion, just before the section on the four fires, a battle follows immediate upon the call for judgement.

⁹⁷⁸ This is reminiscent of the passage from Cyril of Alexandria cited by Smyth, to the effect that the soul must confront the particular devil attached to each sin in turn. Smyth, ‘The Origins of Purgatory’, p. 116. She refers to his *Homily 11, Patrologia Graeca 77:1073-76*.

⁹⁷⁹ §10. ‘at length, the Lord presiding as judge, the angels being triumphant and the adversaries crushed and conquered...’.

⁹⁸⁰ ‘...the holy man was surrounded by immeasurable brightness, the choirs of saints and angels chanting’.

of these elements in the narrative as signals of salvation and of Fursa's acceptance as a *uir beatus* was discussed in chapter 3.2.1.

4.4.1.2 The Winnowing Bridge

The motif of the winnowing bridge⁹⁸¹ is an eschatological sorting device for souls, who are generally able to cross the bridge easily, or not at all. The motif was widespread in medieval Europe, but was perhaps primarily known from its inclusion in Gregory's *Dial.* IV.36.⁹⁸² It is also included in Recension C of the Redactions of *VSP*.⁹⁸³ The motif in Recension C essentially contains the opening line and three sub-elements: i) the announcement of the river with beasts devouring souls like wolves; ii) the bridge, which good souls cross without doubt, and bad souls according to their sins and/or works; iii) a reference to dwellings and a parable from Matt. 13:30, applied to sinners of the same kind bound together [taken directly from *Dial.* IV.35]; and iv) the statement that each one can only cross the bridge in so far he deserves to. In *FA* (§§40-2) the bridge spans a perilous, fiery valley with eight beasts in it (no wolves are mentioned).⁹⁸⁴ *FA* omits no. iii in Recension C, but none of the texts (including any of the independent copies) edited by Jiroušková containing this motif preserve it in that form. As Carey has pointed out, *FA* shares with the analogous accounts in the Redactions the

fundamental resemblances [that] only the good can cross the bridge; ...[the suggestion that] that various ordeals intermediate between easy success and utter failure may await the imperfectly good; and [that] the

⁹⁸¹ The motif originally probably derives from the Persian tradition of the Chinvat bridge (Gnoli, G. 'Chinvat bridge', transl. R. DeGaris in Jones, *et al.*, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 1647).

⁹⁸² [Zimmerman, *Dialogues*, IV.37]. Cf. the vision of Sunniulf in Gregory of Tours' *HF* IV.33 and the account of the monk of Wenlock described in Boniface's letter to Eadfrith (letter X), ed. in Tangl, M., *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH Epistola selectae 1 (Berlin: MGH, 1916; repr. 1989), pp. 7-15; transl. in Emerton, E., *The Letters of St. Boniface*, Records of Civilization: Sources & Studies 31 (New York: Columbia UP, 1940), pp. 25-31. Dumville points out that the motif must have been in circulation in the Latin West as early as the sixth century, since the accounts in the *HF* and *Dial.* are most likely independent witnesses ('Towards', p. 71).

⁹⁸³ Motif no. 12 in Jiroušková's thematic summary of the scene structures of the Redactions (*op. cit.* pp. 165-70). Generally the manuscript copies of this Recension date to the twelfth century or later: but one (Jiroušková's Ag) dates to the tenth century. It is therefore not impossible that this recension, which may be largely equated with Silverstein's Redaction IV (*Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 52-6), originated sometime in the tenth century.

⁹⁸⁴ §40. *Glenn lán ditheiniú fris anall. Lassar ann co téit dara oraib for cech leth. Dub a íchtar, derg a medón 7 a uachtar. Ocht mbiasta ann. A súile amal brutha teintide.*

chief threat for those who fall from the bridge is the monstrous beasts
who wait below⁹⁸⁵

The account in *FA* is closer to Recension C than to the *Dial.* IV.36, where the river is described as black and stinking rather than fiery, and no beasts are mentioned at all.⁹⁸⁶ It may, however, still owe somewhat to Gregory.⁹⁸⁷ While most accounts distinguish between those who are able to cross the bridge and those who fall off it, the author of *FA* distinguishes between three groups: those for whom the bridge is broad so that they cross safely and without fear; those for whom the bridge is narrow at first, but broad at the end, so that they are able to cross ‘after great peril’ (*iar mórgábud*); and those for whom the bridge is broad at first, but then narrows, so that they fall into the river (§41). While Recension C, as Carey points out, allows for any number of trials for imperfect souls crossing the bridge, it does not explicitly describe three groups. I would suggest that, for this embellishment, the author of *FA* may in turn have drawn on *Dial.* IV.36. There Gregory initially distinguishes between the good, who cross safely, and the bad, who fall off, but then proceeds to describe the experience of Stephen, who has slipped and is seen dangling off the bridge with good spirits pulling him up and evil spirits pulling him down. Gregory explains that his good and bad deeds are competing in him.⁹⁸⁸ He thus envisages a third group whose good and bad deeds are (near-) equal. Whilst the bridge scene technically only appears to allow for two options (to cross safely or fall down), Gregory’s insertion of the struggle motif effectively creates the possibility of a third option: to cross safely after a struggle. In addition, Gregory explains the bridge motif by referring to Matt. 7:14, writing that the road to eternal life is narrow,⁹⁸⁹ a motif that *FA* employs in its description of the narrowness and broadness of the bridge as experienced by those crossing it. Both in the Redactions and in *FA* the motif of those whose good and evil are equal follows the bridge motif in a separate motif, instead of being a part of it.⁹⁹⁰ Thus, I would suggest that Recension C first separated the motif as it stands in the *Dial.* IV.36 into two separate motifs and that *FA* subsequently

⁹⁸⁵ Carey, ‘Fís Adomnáin’, note to §§40-2.

⁹⁸⁶ IV.36, *PL* 77, col. 385: *niger atque caliginosus foetoris intolerabilis*.

⁹⁸⁷ Cf. Dumville, ‘Towards’, pp. 71-3.

⁹⁸⁸ IV.36, *PL* 77, cols. 383-5; Zimmerman, *Dialogues*, [IV.37] pp. 239-41.

⁹⁸⁹ IV.37, *PL* 77:388 *Ex rerum, Petre, imaginibus pensamus merita causarum. Per pontem quippe ad amoena loca transire justos aspexit: Quia angusta ualde est semita quae ducit ad uitam*. The vision of Sunniulf in the *HF* also emphasizes the narrowness of the bridge.

⁹⁹⁰ Cf. chapter 4.2.1, pp. 208-9 above.

drew its inspiration from a copy of Recension C, or else a version of the motif very close to it. However, the author then embellished it to reflect the model of the three-fold division of souls and to include the detail on the breadth of the bridge, for which he very likely drew on *Dial.* IV.36 in turn. In addition, a further source may be considered. The vision of Sunniulf, in Gregory of Tours' *HF* IV.33,⁹⁹¹ records a similar scene with a narrow bridge over a burning river. It has been combined, however, with an immersion motif: the text records men plunging into the river from its banks and being submerged up to the waist, the armpits and the chin. In *FA*, the scene with the sinners tied to fiery pillars, immersed in the sea of fire up to their chin, occurs only two paragraphs after the bridge motif. Against the background of these different parallels, it becomes clear that *FA* cannot be said to have drawn on any one source for its winnowing motif. Rather, *FA* itself presents a highly unique account of what must have been a fairly commonplace topos.

In *TPP* (§15) the bridge is employed as a winnowing device spanning the river which lies over hell, between the region of punishment and paradise.⁹⁹² Devils attack the souls attempting to cross it in an attempt to catch them and plunge them into hell. *TPP* thus, theoretically, offers the same options as above: those who fall off the bridge fall into a fiery river; those who manage to cross, like Owein, reach paradise; but the crossing may be either easy or difficult. In Owein's case, his faith saves him and the bridge that seemed so horribly slippery, narrow and high, in the end, feels firm underfoot and increases in width as he continues on. Like in *FA*, the bridge is easy to cross for the righteous. Yet both the account preserved in *FA* and that in *TPP* are unique in their interpretation of the motif. They must be placed against the background of any number of variations and each shows signs of having drawn on few of them. For example, the river under the bridge is described as black and stinking in the *Dialogi*, as beast-filled in Recension C, burning in the vision of Sunniulf and *FA* (where it is a valley); in *TPP* it is stinking, burning and full of demons.

Finally, in *VT* the same motif of the winnowing bridge is adapted twice as a punishment. First, in §5, the bridge motif is echoed in the narrow path which Tnugdál must traverse while avoiding treacherous attacks; second, in §7 it becomes a

⁹⁹¹ See above, n. 982.

⁹⁹² §15. Cf. above, pp. 205.

bridge with sharp nails which thieves are required to cross, while carrying the burden of their stolen object. Neither of these instances describes a bridge which leads to paradise. Instead, the bridge has been integrated into a wider landscape of punishment and has lost its original character almost entirely, retaining primarily its function as a trial.

4.4.1.3 A Harsh Middle Ground Between Good and Bad

Both motifs represent an effort to express or explain the type of separation one imagines takes place at the moment of death. For this, the motif of the struggle in the air draws on older, ultimately perhaps Egyptian, sources describing the role of devils and angels as collectors and guides of the soul on its journey through the air, while the motif of the winnowing bridge draws on imagery describing a more literal, horizontal crossing over. Both, to an extent, draw on Gregory's *Dial.* IV.36, in which the Pope combined the struggle motif with the bridge motif. Both motifs are originally based on a twofold dichotomy of salvation and damnation, represented in the form of angels and devils or crossing over safely and falling off the bridge. In both cases, however, this twofold dichotomy is modified and given a third dimension, which reflects both the notion of a 'middling group' and that of a trial or struggle. In both aspects, this third dimension prefigures the development of the interim as an independent eschatological concept and location. It is significant in the context of the development of these motifs within the genre as whole that they are both developed early on in the tradition; both are first attested around the turn of the seventh century, when the concept of the interim first begins to take shape. Both motifs subsequently fall out of use. When the interim landscape begins to take shape as a punitive location, it replaces the concept of the struggle on the road (whether vertical or horizontal) to heaven. In *FA*, the bridge motif, while it retains its winnowing function, has already become subservient to the formation of a punitive landscape. It follows, then, that the characterisation in the text of a particular judgement is intimately connected with its perception of the interim.

In fact, this is exactly what we ought to expect. The particular judgement must be placed in the context of the treatment of the two other categories of souls in this eschatological model; the just and the wicked. As mentioned above, the theological stance, among the Church Fathers, was that the righteous and the

(irredeemably) wicked would, through their behaviour, automatically deserve either salvation or damnation. Consequently, they would not require an interim judgement—nor should we, therefore, expect to find one in the text. The association between the particular judgement and the interim is thus entirely natural. It seems that in *VL* such a design is implicit; the wicked reside in the fiery sea forever, while the righteous, by analogy, go straight to heaven.⁹⁹³ Yet a division between those already in their permanent locations and those still awaiting their final judgement is mentioned explicitly only in *VT* and *TPP*. In both texts, those already damned reside in the lowest part of hell.⁹⁹⁴ I have argued above that in *VT* the souls of those beyond the gold wall also appear to be there permanently.⁹⁹⁵ However, in *VT*, these souls are referred to as ‘already judged’ (*am iudicati*), and we may surmise from other references that the author believed that *some* form of personal judgement takes place when the souls are placed in their respective locations.⁹⁹⁶ The souls of the righteous in *VT*—and perhaps in *FA*—would appear not to go to their allocated places of reward directly, but only after passing through the punishments.⁹⁹⁷ It is notable that this division of ‘already judged’ and ‘to be judged’ is explicit only in *VT* and *TPP*, both of which omit any reference to a judgement scene (the winnowing motif in *TPP* comes closest to approximating a judgement): in these texts, the landscape itself has become the trial. Its outcome depends on the measure of one’s sinfulness. In addition, the souls of the righteous, the *boni non ualde* and the *mali non ualde* in *TPP*, and equally those of the *mali non ualde* in *VT*, may progress further after its punishment in each location has been completed. This is stated most explicitly by the archbishops in *TPP*, who confirm that the soul may migrate upwards after its dues

⁹⁹³ See pp. 204, 241 above.

⁹⁹⁴ See pp. 205–6 above. *Sed isti qui adhuc sunt in inferioribus iam iudicati; Paciuntur quidem primitus ea. que ante uidebas minora; et tunc ducuntur ad ista. de quibus nullus qui. semel intrauerit. amplius exire poterit*, Pfeil, pp. 33, 39; ‘From here on those who are in the lower parts have already been judged; First, they suffer the minor punishments which you saw before, and they are then brought to these, from which no one, once he has entered, can ever more exit’, *Tnugdál*, pp. 134, 139. *preter eos qui infra os putei infernalis detinentur*, Easting, p. 144, ll. 863–4; *Patrick’s Purgatory*, p. 69.

⁹⁹⁵ See p. 226.

⁹⁹⁶ In addition to the above, there is the reference that King Cormac is described with the verb *iudicatur*. Pfeil, p. 46.

⁹⁹⁷ *FA*: the bridge §§41–2 and the journey through the seven heavens; in *VT* this is exemplified by the pilgrim priest (§5, *presbiter peregrinus*) and explained by the angel in §6. Pfeil, pp. 14–5, 27; *Tnugdál*, pp. 119, 128.

have been paid.⁹⁹⁸ In these texts, the moment of decision at which one is judged has thus made way for a protracted testing and measuring, and ultimately, certainly in *TPP*, but less obviously in *VT*, paved the way for gradual purification. In this process, the Last Judgement has fallen almost completely out of focus.

4.4.2 Universal Judgement and Salvation

Considering the importance in these visions of the individual soul, the interim, and the particular judgement, it comes as no surprise that references to the universal Last Judgement or Resurrection are few and far between. In these texts we find no speculation on the events of the Last Judgement itself (or on the creation of a millennial kingdom). Any mention of it takes place in the context of the fate of either individual souls or specific groups of souls, whereby the Last Judgement serves as a time of release from their interim reality. It usually serves to contextualise the events narrated with respect to the eschatological time line or to inspire compunction, and to highlight the uncertainty of the interim.

Among the more explicit references to the Last Judgement, the brief explanation given by Beoán and Meldán regarding their expectation of the End probably shows greatest concern for its immanence. They instruct Fursa to preach that the end is near, but when the saint asks for more detail, they qualify their statement by telling him that, while the end is near, mankind will be troubled with plagues and famine before that time. They further describe a sign that will indicate that the end is at hand.⁹⁹⁹ Subsequently, however, the topic of famine is explained allegorically and their conversation turns to the vices of the clergy. The reference to the immanence of the Last Judgement therefore only serves as a reminder to consider one's sins. The threat of damnation is invoked rather than the promise of salvation. A similar, but more ambiguous, phrase in *VL* has the same function: the angel tells Laisrén to remind the Irish to be constant in their righteousness, *ar niba sir a n-*

⁹⁹⁸ See pp. 214-5.

⁹⁹⁹ "*Praedicans ergo omnibus adnuntia quia in proximo est uindicta.*" *Beato Furseo interrogante de mundi fine, aiunt finem creaturae etiam tunc non esse, quamuis in proximo sit, sed famis et mortalitatis plagis humanum genus esse uexandum; quod etiam signo solis radios suos anno praeterito abscondentis, in modum lunae iugiter splendens, significatum est.* According to Rackham, this sign is inspired by an account recorded in Procopius, *Vandalic War* IV.xiv.5-6. See Rackham, *Transitus*, p. 30, n. 48.

*innraidni doib cona ti éc.*¹⁰⁰⁰ It seems to me that it is simply their mortality to which the text refers, but one cannot rule out that the angel intended the Last Judgement.

Other references limit the time the soul may expect to spend in the interim. In *Red. XI*, the saints will dwell in paradise until the day of Resurrection, and until that time its gates are closed (§10). In *VT* the faithful spouses wait in their place of rest to be called forth to the Kingdom of Heaven at the Last Judgement.¹⁰⁰¹ In *FA* all references to the Last Judgement indicate the end of the temporal interim in which the souls currently exist. Those in the Land of Saints will reside there ‘until the great assembly of Doom’, when they are admitted into the Lord’s presence (§16). Likewise, those in the Land of Punishment whose good and bad are equal and those who gave alms have to await the Last Judgement before they may go to the ‘haven of life’ (§§43, 46). The Land of Demons will remain uninhabited by souls until that time (§47).¹⁰⁰² Here, however, the text invokes both the promise of a great Judgement and that of salvation.

In these descriptions there is sometimes an apparent contradiction, in that they, on occasion, describe the souls’ sojourn in temporary locations as lasting ‘forever’. Thus, rather ambiguously, the faithful spouses in *VT* are in their place of rest without end: *in hac requie gaudebunt sine fine*; and those in the Land of Saints in *FA* are there perpetually (until Doomsday). Such descriptions most likely indicate the apparently infinite duration of time as experienced by the souls. In *FA* this is also expressed in a negative context, by the despair of sinners being tortured in the Land of Punishment, who beg of the Lord that the Judgement may soon come to release

¹⁰⁰⁰ §11. ‘for not long will be their [time of] taking account before death comes to them.’

¹⁰⁰¹ §18. *Quibus iudex iustus. in extremo iudicio est dicturus* “Venite benedicti patris mei possidete regnum uobis paratum ab origine mundi ... Qui expectantes illam beatam spem. et aduentum glorie magni dei; consolantur in tali requie. Pfeil, p. 48; Tnugdál, pp. 146-7.

¹⁰⁰² §16. *bidat marthanaig isin mórglóir-sin co mórdáil brátha, coros córaigea in Brithem fíren i llaithe ind fuigill isna sostaib 7 isna inadaib i mbiat oc déicsiu gnúisse Dé.* ‘will be perpetually in that great glory until the great assembly of Doom, when the righteous Judge will dispose them on the Day of Judgement in the seats and the places in which they will be gazing upon the face of God.’; §43. *7 is i lló brátha midfíther eturru 7 dílegfaid a maith a n-olc isind ló-sin 7 bértair iar sin do phurt bethad i frencarcus gnúise Dé tria bithu sír.* ‘And it is on the Day of Judgement that judgement will be made between them, and their good will cancel out their evil, and they will be borne after that to the haven of life, in the presence of the face of God forever.’; §46 *foídítir do phurt bethad iar mbráth.* ‘after Judgement they are sent to the haven of life.’; §49. *Acht chena ní aittrebat anmann co bráth ar is la demnaib a n-oenur a airechus co laithe ind fuigill.* ‘But souls do not inhabit it until the Judgement; for it is under the charge of the demons alone until the Day of Judgement.’

them from their uncertainty (§50).¹⁰⁰³ In their experience, the period between the present and the Last Judgement forms a vacuum which, due to the mystery surrounding the actual date of the Judgement, becomes endless.

4.4.2.1 The Long View

Part of the outlook coinciding with the expectation of a universal Judgement or Resurrection is the evaluation, not of the individual soul, but of the world and of world history. There are naturally few traces in the texts here discussed, but three episodes qualify under this heading in my opinion. The first two are the episode of the four fires in *VF* (§8) and Laisrén's vision of the souls in the doorway of hell (§9) also described in 4.2.2.2. Here Fursa is looking down at earth while it is being consumed by the four fires, symbolically representing sin. Likewise, Laisrén sees the souls of his fellow countrymen on the threshold of hell, representing their current sinful state. Both these scenes in effect represent a review of the present state of affairs and, simultaneously, a prefiguration of their future fate. The conclusion following each scene is that, unless those involved make amends, they collectively face damnation. In *TPP* we find a different variant. The archbishops begin their lecture with a review of paradigmatic history by telling Owein about the Fall, Original Sin, the Incarnation and the Crucifixion, and its consequences for sinners in the present day: the need for baptism and penance, and, ultimately, the tortures of the afterlife. Crucially, however, in each case, rather than connecting the review to the expectation of the universal Judgment or Resurrection, it is connected to the individual experience of the soul. In *VF* the fires suddenly approach Fursa personally; in *VL* the review is the basis for a question-and-answer scene concerning the best way in which to teach these souls the correct path and motivate them to repent; in *TPP* paradigmatic history is translated into the practical consequences each soul must face.

4.4.3 Salvation in the Present

While the phrase 'salvation in the present' might sound incongruous, it is nonetheless a relevant factor in the discussion of these texts, in particular where it

¹⁰⁰³ *oc neiméile frisin Coimdid im thorrachtain chucu laithe mbrátha co llúath dús in fuigébtas nach n-etaruarad isind fuigiull.* 'pleading with the Lord that the Day of Judgement come to them swiftly so that they may know whether they will obtain any respite at the Judgement.'

concerns the interim. Its relevance is two-fold. First, given that the interim implies an indeterminate period of punishment (or purification) between death and the Last Judgement during which the fate of the soul remains largely uncertain, it is intimately connected with hope of salvation and intercession for dead. I referred to such an interest in intercession in *Vita Columbae* III.13 above,¹⁰⁰⁴ in which the monks aid in procuring the salvation of a recently departed soul. McNamara has pointed out that belief in the value for prayers for the dead is already recorded in the Bible (2 Macc. 12:39-45), but that the text is ambiguous as to “when the prayers would have their effect, whether in an intermediate period of at the general resurrection”.¹⁰⁰⁵ According to Marina Smyth, the hope for salvation of the soul and its release from damnation in expectation of the Last Judgement was incorporated into most early creeds and in early medieval liturgy.¹⁰⁰⁶ Smyth argues, however, that by the third quarter of the seventh century, prayers in an Irish palimpsest sacramentary ask for the soul to be considered worthy of the *prima resurrectio*—a phrase derived from Rev. 20:4-6 which “came to refer to the resurrection of the elect *before* the Last Judgement” in liturgical texts. She points out that this in effect fostered the idea that the ultimate decision on the fate of the soul would remain open until the end-time.¹⁰⁰⁷ This is in line with what is recorded in the key texts discussed here, but, nevertheless, while it must have been an important fact of life, intercession is not a standard feature in most of the key texts. It plays an important role only in *Red. VI* and *TPP*.¹⁰⁰⁸ In *Red. VI* we find the peculiar motif, adapted from *VSP*, of St. Paul himself interceding for souls in hell, through which he successfully releases his entire family from hell. In *TPP* the concept of intercession is open to society at large: the archbishops inform Owein that masses, psalms, prayers and alms will alleviate and diminish torments.¹⁰⁰⁹

Second, it has been noted that for some of the visionaries their journey becomes a transformative experience through which they are cleansed of their sins. This is the case for Fursa, Tnugdál and Owein. While they are not, ultimately

¹⁰⁰⁴ See p. 262.

¹⁰⁰⁵ McNamara, 'Some Aspects', p. 45.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Smyth, 'The Origins of Purgatory', pp. 104-6.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-9.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Though it does not concern intercession for the dead, an intercession motif is also included in *SVA* §8.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 69; *Easting*, p. 144, ll. 867-71. Cf. p. 248.

admitted to heaven, their experience is such as is hoped for when one prays for a deceased soul or submits to penance. In both cases, the aim is to reduce or remove one's sins, and in both cases the effect is expected to be immediate. The experience of the visionary, who manages to achieve this goal to a greater or lesser degree through his journey, demonstrates the possibility of redemption in the present (like a penitent), while encouraging the hope for salvation in the afterlife.

Table 25 Judgement and Salvation

	VF	VL	Red. VI	Red. XI	FA	VT	TPP
5.1.1 Judgement – universal	•			•	•		
5.1.2 Judgement – personal	•	•			•	•	•
5.2.1 Salvation – universal				•	•	•	
5.2.2 Salvation – personal	•	•		•	•	•	•
5.2.3 Salvation in the present	•		•			•	
5.3.1 Review of history							•
5.3.2 Review of the present	(•)	•					

4.5 Conclusion: Classification of the Soul

In this chapter I have explored the journey through the afterlife as a representation of the eschatological landscape through which the soul moves after death. The considerable variation in the texts, both in their scope and their interpretation of this landscape, is evident. My analysis shows, however, that, notwithstanding such variety, many of the texts here discussed explicitly recognise graded levels of access which stand between the soul and its ultimate goal—heaven; these reflect the souls' different levels of sinfulness and their chance of attaining salvation. Hell is often divided in two, whereby an explicit distinction is made a 'hell proper' and other regions in the afterworld intended for the wicked, often represented as a 'lower hell'. In those cases 'hell proper' is intended exclusively for irredeemable souls. Hell is usually thought of as either a fiery sea or a pit. Heaven, on the other hand, is often depicted as a city or congregation, and separated in turn from paradise or the land of saints. Any significant distinction or sub-division made within these areas is often demarcated through sensory cues, limiting the experienced of the visionary. The function embedded in the landscape is thus that of classification of the soul. Where the later texts become more complex in their perception of the categories of the soul, this is reflected in the complexity of the landscape. More often than not, the

geography suggests that the Augustinian threefold system is expanded into a fourfold scheme, whereby the middle group is divided into the not-very-bad and not-very-good. In the case of *VT*, this even becomes a sevenfold system. In order to explain how the souls arrive in these various locations, the texts envisage a number of auxiliary Judgement strategies, which serve to sort the souls in the absence of a formal Judgement scene. Their common ground appears to lie in the perception of this sorting process as a trial or ordeal of measurement. This ordeal is initially expressed in struggle and winnowing motifs, but ultimately encompasses large parts of the journey itself. The centrality of (interim) punishments in the genre, noted in chapter one above, is thus confirmed, but where the landscape highlights the various classifications of the soul, the punishments (as well as the sins connected to them), also reflect common interests. Collectively, the texts are concerned with immorality, in particular with sins of speech or treachery, and with those transgressing while in orders. Finally, the punishments themselves are typically largely modelled on those from the *VSP* family.

5. General Conclusions and Avenues for Further Research

5.1 Conclusions on the Typology of the Key Texts

In chapter one of this dissertation I proposed a new paradigm of characteristic features for medieval vision literature in order to analyse the extant medieval Irish vision texts. My analysis of the typology of the medieval Irish visions reveals that, on the whole, the texts sustain the pattern of characteristic features proposed, as well as the general definition of vision literature as discussed in chapter 1.1.1. As expected, certain features are more consistent and more important than others, and especially those features under the category ‘rhetoric’ may be considered optional. As suggested in chapter three, it is possible to distinguish between what we may call constitutive texts, representing the full narrative pattern of the genre, and what we may call for convenience *topoi* or *exempla*. The latter only retain a select number of (largely thematic) features, the configuration of which—apart from the vision and the visionary—appears to be relatively arbitrary.

Considering now the constitutive texts, it shows that each of the four other categories have elements that may be considered requirements. Thus, in the category ‘manner (of revelation)’ the aspects of visionary and auditory revelation are represented in all texts. Close analysis of the features in this category has also revealed that the combination of ‘sight, answer, question’ forms an integral structural element in the vision. This triadic pattern appears to be derived from *VSP*¹⁰¹⁰ and forms the heart of the *Redactions*. It highlights the importance of speech as one of the driving elements in the storyline; and a preoccupation with didactics, even in such texts as *FA*, where the dialogue appears to have fallen out.¹⁰¹¹ Moreover, in three of the texts the question-and-answer dialogue is modified: in *VF* and *VL* it takes place primarily between the angels and the devils, which is, in both cases, the direct result of the struggle motif both contain.

In *TPP* the entire dialogue is subverted into deliberate non-speech. In doing so, it places the power of locution with Owein as opposed to with the angel or with the devils: in effect, Owein is retaining control. During his journey he only speaks in order to invoke Christ, again emphasizing the power of words. That it is the

¹⁰¹⁰ Though *VSP* was highly influential, other avenues of influence cannot be ruled out.

¹⁰¹¹ See p. 139 above.

visionary who is in control here is also evident from the fact that he undertakes his journey ‘in his body’: he is not suddenly taken out of his body by angels. He is not frightened, but actively sets out to seek his own redemption.

In the category ‘characters’, the most important features are naturally the visionary and the mediator, but reaction and effect may also be considered essential. This feature is closely connected with the identity strategies identified in chapter three. Analysed together, the texts fall into two groups: in *VL*, *Red. VI*, *Red. XI*, and *FA* the visionary is an authoritative *religiosus* relaying a divine message to the world; while in the later texts, *VT* and *TPP* (and also in *SVA* and *Lóchán*), he is a lay role-model whose experience centres around personal transformation. Notably, *VF* appears to draw on both models. The visionary’s situation is important too, but is omitted in the *Redactions*, which abbreviate only the section on the punishments from *VSP*, and in *FA*, which equally pays little attention to the visionary himself. It is notable also that only *VF* and *VL* use all four of the mediator’s functions. This, too, appears to be connected to the struggle motif.

In the category ‘spatial aspect’, the core features are the interim (notwithstanding the ambiguity in *Red. VI*) and its punishments. The texts are rather consistent also regarding the scope of spatial features they represent. However, *VF* and *VL* are visibly less represented here, which is understandable in that they reflect an earlier phase in the genre. There is significant variation in the selection of elements from the category ‘temporal aspect’: each text very clearly chooses its own configuration with the respect to the particular judgement or the Last Judgement. Yet it is obvious—and expected—that personal eschatology dominates the genre. Only *FA* anticipates both personal and universal judgement and salvation.

To conclude, then, we may briefly review Carol Zaleski’s argument for a fourfold development.¹⁰¹² There is little doubt that *VSP* stands at the cradle of much of the blueprint of medieval vision literature as I have described it. In addition, Gregory the Great, but also the *Redactions*, have contributed many pivotal motifs. Of Zaleski’s third stage, the “full-blown visionary journey”, we see a reflection in the expanding paradigm, yet just what this judgment entails must remain subjective. Should we, for instance, consider *FA* any less of a vision than *VT* because it omits

¹⁰¹² See 1.1.1.1 above.

the dialogue? I cannot agree, however, with her ‘fourth stage’, exemplified by *TPP* as the “fully realized form of ... this genre”.¹⁰¹³ As mentioned, *TPP* is in important ways deliberately *not* a typical vision text; in fact, it is rather a departure from it. I do not think it helpful, however, to look for the epitome of vision literature. Rather I think we ought to see each of these texts as an application and adaptation of the same genre. Each text takes as its starting point the generic structure of the *uisio* and modifies this structure by emphasizing certain elements or even radically reducing some. This confirms perhaps Jauss’s statement that “texts work upon genres as much as they are shaped by them” so that participation in a genre may take many different forms. While the present study can, in the light of a genre that is itself so comprehensive, only be suggestive, I hope to have furthered our understanding of how medieval authors interacted with and manipulated genre to create a new narrative and communicate a new message.

¹⁰¹³ Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, chapter 3, summarised on (and quoted from) p. 42.

Table 26 Comparison of the Key Texts

	Vita Fursei	Vision of Laisrén	VSP Red. VI	VSP Red. XI	Fís Adomnán	Visio Tnugdalis	Tractatus	SVA	Vision of Lóchán
Manner									
1.1 Vision	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1.2 Journey	(•)	•	•	(•)	•	•	•		•
1.3 Auditory	•	•	•	•	(•)	•	•	(•)	
1.3.1 Monologue	•	•		(•)	(•)	•	•	(•)	
1.3.2 Dialogue	•	•	•	•		•	(•)		
Characters									
2.1 Visionary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
2.1.1 Identity	R	R	R	R	R	S	S	R	S
2.1.2 Reaction/Effect	•	(•)	(•)	(•)	(•)	•	•	(•)	(•)
2.1.3 Situation	•	•			(•)	•	•		•
2.1.4 Separation of body and soul	S	S		?	S	S	B		
2.3 Mediator	•	•	•	•	•	•	()	•	
2.4 Familiar	•					•	•		
2.5 Other beings	•	•		•	•	•	•		•
Rhetoric									
3.1 Exordium	•			(•)	•	•	•	•	
3.2 Peroration					•		•	•	
3.3 Authorial statement	•					•	•		
3.4 Paraenesis	•	•				•	•		
3.5 Hortatory instructions	•	•			•	•			
Spatial Aspect									
4.1 Sequence	C	IH	CIH	CIJI	JCH	IHJC	IHJ		HC
4.2 Hell		•	•		•	•	•		•
4.3.1 Heaven	(•)		•	•	•	•	(•)		•
4.3.2 Access to divine presence			•	•	•	•			•
4.4 Other/interim	•	•	?	•	•	•	•		
4.5.1 Punishments	(•)	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
4.5.2 Like for like		•	•	•	•	•			
4.5.3 Of the visionary	•					•	•		
Temporal Aspect									
5.1.1 Judgement – universal	•			•	•				
5.1.2 Judgement – personal	•	•			•	•	•		
5.2.1 Salvation – universal				•	•	•			
5.2.2 Salvation – personal	•	•		•	•	•	•		
5.2.3 Salvation in the present	•		•			•			
5.3.1 Review of history							•		
5.3.2 Review of the present	(•)	•							

5.2 In Context: Steps towards Comparative Analysis

While a number of avenues for further research still lie open, not least with respect to individual texts, the most pertinent development of the present study, in my opinion, would be a comparative analysis of the Irish visions in the context of contemporary visions from the Latin West and the Irish *immrama*. I take the position that such a typological comparison, placing the Irish visions in the context of contemporary and antecedent cognate examples, may provide a first step in ascertaining the relevant position of the Irish visions within the wider canon and provide a case study for the interaction of borrowed and native genres.

Second, the full range of meaning and diversity in the genre itself can only be discovered if attention is paid to the comprehensive corpus of vision literature that has survived. Notwithstanding recent major advances in the field, a full history of the origins of the genre is currently not yet within our grasp. Much of this corpus is as yet understudied and not available in accessible editions. A study of the full corpus would not only offer opportunity to develop the typology proposed in this dissertation, but also contribute significantly to our knowledge of popular conceptions of the interim and of the history of purgation and intercession in the literary eschatological traditions of the early Christian West.

Third, given the natural affinity of apocalyptic literature and vision literature, a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the two genres would be welcomed. In my view, such research would ideally examine the affinities of a representative sample of visions from across the medieval period with a selection of Jewish and Christian apocalypses which were verifiably well known in the medieval period or copies of which are attested in medieval manuscripts.¹⁰¹⁴ In principle, the most straightforward course of action would be to limit the selection of apocalypses to those of Type II (see appendix B). This approach would work well for a structural comparison of the genre and could potentially be very fruitful with respect to our understanding of genre development; of the transmission and adaptation of early Christian literature in the Middle Ages; and of the development of eschatological thought.

¹⁰¹⁴ I am currently preparing a study in this area to complement the current dissertation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The *Second Vision of Adomnán*

Introduction

The *Second Vision of Adomnán*, as this text is commonly called, is not so much a vision as a homily containing an exhortation to fasting and prayer. The occasion for this exhortation, and the reason for the title of the homily, is a prophecy concerning a disaster that was to strike on the feast of the Decollation of John the Baptist (29 August). According to our text, this disaster will strike in an embolismic leap year at the end of a cycle in which that feast falls on a Friday. This prophecy, together with the ‘law of spiritual direction’ which describes how to prevent the calamity, was purportedly revealed by an angel to Adomnán ua Tinne, abbot of Iona, and is commonly associated with the year 1096 A.D.

The attribution of the prophecy to Adomnán is evidently fictitious. The choice of Adomnán of Iona as the visionary may partially be explained through his connection with his predecessor St Columba,¹⁰¹⁵ through which he became liable to association with visionary and prophetic experiences.¹⁰¹⁶ By choosing Adomnán, the author is situating his work in the context provided by texts such as *Fís Adomnáin*, in which Adomnán has his vision on the Feast of St. John, and *Betha Adamnáin*, in which he is said to have foretold a great misfortune that would occur at the feast of St John.¹⁰¹⁷ In *Betha Adamnáin*, the prophecy is confirmed by a young man visiting one Colmán of Croaghpatrick, and is fulfilled by the death of Adomnán himself at the next festival of St John. Though I am not quite convinced by Eugene O’Curry’s statement that this would appear to be the ‘real origin and verification of the St. John’s festival prediction’, it certainly provided the author of the current text with a precedent for associating Adomnán with John the Baptist.¹⁰¹⁸ In fact, the earliest

¹⁰¹⁵ St. Columba is traditionally held to be his kinsman as well as his predecessor; but see Lacey, B., ‘Adomnán and Donegal’, in Wooding, J. M., *et al.* (eds.), *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 20–35.

¹⁰¹⁶ On this topic see: Carey, ‘Varieties of Supernatural Contact in the Life of Adamnán’; Nagy, ‘The Middle-Aged Life of Adamnán’.

¹⁰¹⁷ That is, his nativity, 23 September. Cf. Clancy, T.O., ‘Adomnán in Medieval Gaelic Literary Tradition’, in Wooding, J. M., *et al.* (eds.), *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 112–22, p. 121.

¹⁰¹⁸ O’Curry, E., *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, repr. edn (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1861; repr. 1995), p. 424. It is uncertain at this time what the original source of the

source concerning the prophecy that Ireland will be subjected to a terrible plague on a feast of John the Baptist attributes this prophecy to St Mo Ling,¹⁰¹⁹ an attribution which is repeated in the late twelfth-century commentary to the *Féilire Óengusso*.¹⁰²⁰ This is not insignificant in light of the observation that our text prescribes an office for warding off the pestilence which is nearly identical to that in the late eighth-century gospel codex which is known as the Book of Mulling because of its supposed association with Mo Ling himself. It is possible, therefore, that the prophecy too was initially associated with Mo Ling, and was only attributed to other saints at a later date.¹⁰²¹

Whilst in our text the formal attribution of the prophecy is to Adomnán, following the bilingual introduction Adomnán ceases to be mentioned, and it is rather Patrick who becomes the central figure. In fact, the role of Patrick as intercessor to the Irish is inextricably tied to the subject of the sermon. Following the prologue, the author proceeds to point out that the people of Ireland are completely dependent on God and Saint Patrick if they wish to abate their approaching doom: Patrick is the only saint who can ward off the fulfilment of the prophecy and the only saint who is not appealing *against* the Irish on account of their misbehaviour (§§4, 6). The author reminds us that it is Patrick ‘whom the Lord has entrusted with saving them from paganism, idolatry and unfaith’ and that ‘it is he who will be their judge and advocate on Doomsday’ (§2).¹⁰²²

This element of our homily is quite possibly a reflex of the historical and political reality of the time: it seems that the church of Armagh took the lead in

prophecy was and what the nature of this plague was understood to be, and further study into the interrelationship of the texts involved is paramount. Both the *Lore of the Fiery Arrow* and *Betha Adamnáin* are currently dated to the tenth century, but in any case, they do not include the same details: the *Lore* describes a prophecy associated with a leap year like the *Second Vision*, but the *Life* instead ties the prophecy to Adomnán’s death on 23 September.

¹⁰¹⁹ See the textual note on *ac sguapadh* in §5 below, and the forthcoming edition of the text *Scuap a Fánait* by Hugh Fogharty in *The End and Beyond*. I follow John Carey’s dating of this text.

¹⁰²⁰ Stokes, *Féilire Óengusso*, pp. 190-91. The commentary also includes related prophecies by Ailerán the Wise, Colum Cille, and Riagail. For the date of the commentary see Ó Riain, P., ‘The Martyrology of Óengus: The Transmission of the Text’, *Studia Hibernica* 31 (2000/1) 221-42, pp. 236-7.

¹⁰²¹ See again the note on *ac sguapadh* below. This aspect of the transmission of the legend is still unclear and needs further study. The suggestion offered here is, therefore, only presented tentatively.

¹⁰²² This tradition derives, of course, from Muirchú’s *Vita S. Patricii* II.6 (in Bieler, L. (ed. and trans.), *The Patrician Texts from the Book of Armagh*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10 (Dublin: DIAS, 1979) pp. 116-7) and is frequently repeated; see e.g. Stokes, W. (ed. and trans.), *The Tripartite Life of Patrick with Other Documents Relating to that Saint*, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* 89, 2 vols., 1st edn (London: H.M. Stationery Office, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), i.119; and *idem*, *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, p. 627.

reacting to the prophecy.¹⁰²³ The entry for A.D. 1096 in the *Annals of Ulster* and of *Loch Cé* reads:

Uamon mór for ferai Erenn [uile] ria feil Eoin na bliadna-sa co
rothesairc Dia [& Patraic] tria troiscitibh comarba Patraic 7 cleirech n-
Erenn archena.¹⁰²⁴

On the evidence of the annals, therefore, the churches of Ireland, with the bishop of Armagh at their head, feared that the prophecy might come true in this year. However, James F. Kenney already noted that there seems to be confusion concerning the exact nature of the signs that mark the fatal year.¹⁰²⁵ Indeed, upon evaluation of the prophecy it would seem that it is not at all clear that 1096 fulfilled all the requirements. Our prophecy specifies, as mentioned above, that the year in which the calamity will befall the Irish (1) is bissextile (i.e. a leap year); (2) is embolismic (i.e. it has an intercalary moon); (3) falls at the end of a cycle; and (4) is a year in which the feast of the Decollation of John the Baptist (29 August) falls on a Friday. There is no doubt that 1096 was both bissextile and embolismic: the year has Golden Number 14 (i.e., it is the fourteenth year in the lunar cycle), which traditionally has both of these qualities.¹⁰²⁶ However, Daniel McCarthy informs me that whilst every nineteenth year of the Dionysian lunar cycle is indeed embolismic and so accords with the description *in anno ... embolesmi et in fine circuli*, the final year of this cycle can only fall on a bissextile year once in every seventy-six years, so that in the eleventh century only the year A.D. 1044 fulfils the conditions of being

¹⁰²³ The coarb of Patrick went on a circuit of Munster in A.D. 1094, carrying away both fixed and voluntary tribute. Hence, Armagh was clearly trying to establish itself as the leading church of Ireland.

¹⁰²⁴ *AU* 1096.3. 'Great fear seized the men of [all] Ireland before the feast of John in this year; and God [and Patrick] protected them through the fasts of the successor of Patrick and the other clerics of Ireland.' The additions in brackets are the readings of the *Annals of Loch Cé*, whose entry is nearly identical. The translation of *AU* is that of Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill's (1983), that of *LC* by William M. Hennessy (1871).

¹⁰²⁵ Kenney, J.F., *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical*, 2nd (1966) edn (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1929; repr. 1993), pp 750-52.

¹⁰²⁶ For 1096 being bissextile: Blackburn, B. and L. Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), p. 823; McCarthy, D. (ed. and trans.), 'Chronological Synchronisation of the Irish Annals', 4th edn (Dublin: Department of Computer Science, Trinity College, 2005)

<http://www.scss.tcd.ie/misc/kronos/chronology/synchronisms/Edition_4/K_trad/K_synch.htm>.

[The remainder of 1096 divided by 28 is 4, hence 1096 has Kl. Ian. iii and is bissextile.] For year fourteen being embolismic: Wallis, F., (trans.), *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, Translated Texts for Historians 29 (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999), pp xlvi, 294.

bissextile, embolismic, and at the end of a lunar cycle.¹⁰²⁷ In this year, however, the feast of John the Baptist did not fall on a Friday but on a Wednesday.¹⁰²⁸ O'Curry had already envisaged a problem here and suggested that perhaps the cycle intended is not the 19-year lunar cycle, but the cycle of the epact, which is in its twenty-third year in 1096, and which, according to him, is thus at the end of its cycle in this year.¹⁰²⁹ This is a shrewd suggestion, but it contains an error: the cycle of the epact runs up to 29 or 30 (the number of days in a lunar month) and thus is not at its end in the 23rd year. The epact to which O'Curry referred is the Alexandrian epact (see below) or the place of the moon in its cycle on 22 March. To make the Alexandrian system of reckoning more suitable to the Julian calendar, however, the epact was sometimes calculated for 1 January.¹⁰³⁰ Neither of these, however, falls at the end of the lunar cycle. Hence the year 1096 only fulfils three of the requirements—that is, if we assume that *circuli* in our text refers, as it usually does, to the lunar cycle (see below). Even if we were to ignore the syntax of our text and consider the lunar cycle for 29 August itself, we observe that on this day the moon is rather at the start of its cycle. A summary of the relevant data for the Easter calculation of 1096 looks as follows:

year	feria Kl. Ian.	Golden Number ¹⁰³¹	Alex. Epact ¹⁰³²	Epact Ian. ¹⁰³³	Concur - rent ¹⁰³⁴ (feria 24M)	luna XIV ¹⁰³⁵	Easter ¹⁰³⁶	Epact Aug. ¹⁰³⁷
1096	iii	14	23	2	2	12A	13A	9

¹⁰²⁷ Pers. comm. I am much obliged to Dr McCarthy for discussing this problem with me. Dr McCarthy also noted that the year 1196 is one of the eligible years, which raises the question whether someone made an error in computing the date of the disaster.

¹⁰²⁸ Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 892.

¹⁰²⁹ O'Curry, *Lectures*, p. 452. I have not been able to determine his source for this statement.

¹⁰³⁰ The Alexandrian calendar started the year at 1 September, but the Julian calendar counts from 1 January.

¹⁰³¹ Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 810 for this and the following calculations. Golden Number = The remainder of 1096 + 1 over 19: (57 x 19) + 14.

¹⁰³² Alexandrian epact: remainder of 1096 over 19 multiplied by 11 = 143. The remainder of 143 to 30: (30 x 4) + 23.

¹⁰³³ McCarthy, *Chronological Synchronisation*, table of epacts; Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 824.

¹⁰³⁴ The concurrent: 1096 + 9 = 1105 = (28 x 39) + 13. 13/4 = 3 + 13 = 16 / 7 = 2 (Monday).

¹⁰³⁵ Luna XIV is calculated through a short table (*ibid.*, p. 810), which gives for this case 35 – 23 (Epact) = 12 April.

¹⁰³⁶ The next Sunday following luna XIV is calculated by taking the concurrent + the 'Paschal Regular' (the number of days luna XIV is in advance of 24 March). Hence 2 + 5 = 7 (Saturday). The next Sunday after that is April 13th. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 862.

¹⁰³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 824.

In this year the feast of the Decollation of John the Baptist, however, did fall on a Friday.¹⁰³⁸ It appears, then, that this element was more important than the ‘end of a cycle’ element. This is partly corroborated by the annals: *Chronicon Scottorum* gives as the main reason for concern the fact that the Decollation is on a Friday.

Bliadain na fele Eoin an bliadainsi for Aoine gur gab egla mor fir
ErENN inte.¹⁰³⁹

One is left to wonder, then, why 1096 was the inauspicious year. There were other embolismic leap years in which the decollation fell on a Friday, e.g. A.D. 1012. I believe that we have a clue to this in §2 of our text: ‘One mortality after the other, then, will come to them up to the mortality of the Feast of John [the Baptist]’. The year 1096 was preceded by a number of unfortunate events. The annals testify to bad weather leading to scarcity in 1094 (*LC, AU*), followed by a great snow in January which killed men, cattle and birds in 1095 (*LC, AU*) and subsequently, in the same year, by a great pestilence which raged ‘from the kalends of August to the May following, viz.:—it was called a “mortal year”’ (*LC, AU, CS*).¹⁰⁴⁰ The combination of these events, together with the fact that 1096 was an embolismic leap year in which the Decollation fell on Friday, likely caused the panic attested in the annals above.

It is this impending disaster, then, that our author takes as his *causa scribendi*. Following the introduction, he neatly juxtaposes the fate of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ churches (§4), following this with a description of the disaster to come (§5), and an explanation of why the Irish have deserved this disaster (§§6, 7) before providing them with the remedy (§§8-11). This last section is indeed construed as a ‘law of spiritual direction’. It prescribes four commandments¹⁰⁴¹ by means of which one may obtain mercy from God and Patrick and escape the calamity. In particular the ‘rules’ of the fourth commandment, an injunction to perform three-day fasts and to pray, are described in great detail, recalling the prescriptive specificity of a law text. This legalistic impression is strengthened by the mention of three *aitiri*, high-

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 832, 858.

¹⁰³⁹ *CS* 1096. ‘The year in which the feast of John fell on a Friday, and great fear seized the men of Ireland on account of it.’

¹⁰⁴⁰ Citing *LC* 1095.4. Curiously, the entry for 1096 in the *Annals of Tigernach* states only ‘A bad year goes and a good year should come, that is, the year of the festival of St John’. Stokes, W. (ed.), *The Annals of Tigernach*, 2 vols. (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1993, reprinted from *RC* 1895-7).

¹⁰⁴¹ Effectively five in the text.

status 'guarantors' or 'hostage-sureties', and of those classes and circumstances which are exempt; as well as by the inclusion of punishments in the form of tithes and general damnation to come upon those who refuse to observe the three-day fasts. Notably, legal action against anyone partaking in the fast is also outlawed for its duration, because it distracts the mind from God. The rules also include a list of hymns to be recited in order to seek mercy from God and Patrick. The author rounds off his polemic with a series of exempla from the Old Testament demonstrating the efficacy of *deuota penitentia* in difficult situations.

Manuscripts

The Second Vision of Adomnán is preserved in four manuscripts dating from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. The oldest and lengthiest copy is found in the manuscript known as the *Leabhar Breac*, now Dublin, RIA 23 P 16 (cat. 1230), pp. 258-9, c. A.D. 1408-11 (B).¹⁰⁴² The text was first edited by Whitley Stokes in 1891 from this manuscript.¹⁰⁴³ Stokes has provided a semi-diplomatic edition, presented in short paragraphs often consisting of one or two sentences. He contributed a brief introduction, a few footnotes and a concise verbal index, but no further discussion. Stokes admitted that at some points his translation was uncertain. The language of this copy is consistent with a date in the Middle Irish period. Amongst the noteworthy features is the loss of the neuter and the dat. pl. ending of the article, and the falling together of masculine gen. sg. and feminine nom. sg. as *in*, with no occurrence of Old Irish *ind*^L. The masculine nom. pl. appears as either *in* or *na*. This usage is nearly identical to that in *Aislinge meic Con Glinne* (dated to the last quarter of the eleventh century).¹⁰⁴⁴ Significant also is the almost complete lack of independent pronouns: all but one (l. 114) occur as predicate of the copula in conformity with Old Irish usage. The verbal system also contains a significant proportion of unverbated verbs, and the Old Irish simple preterite has for the most part been superseded by augmented forms no longer designating the perfect.

A second copy of the text, dating to the middle of the seventeenth century, is preserved in Dublin, TCD 1317 (shelfmark H.2.15b), pp. 137-53, c. 1643 (T), in the

¹⁰⁴² Ó Concheanainn, T., 'The Scribe of the Leabhar Breac', *Ériu* 24 (1973) 64-79, pp. 71-3.

¹⁰⁴³ Stokes, 'Adamnan's Second Vision'; though the opening of the text had previously been transcribed by Eugene O'Curry and printed in Appendix CL to his *Lectures*.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Jackson, *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, pp. xxvi and 78-9.

hand of Dubhaltach Mac Fírhisigh.¹⁰⁴⁵ The text is virtually identical to that of *B* and I believe we may safely posit that Dubhaltach was using this manuscript—or else a very faithful copy—as his exemplar. We know, moreover, that Dubhaltach made significant use of this manuscript when making additions to his *Book of Genealogies*, and Nollaig Ó Muraíle states that there is nothing improbable in his having made use of it a decade earlier.¹⁰⁴⁶ He appears to have copied our text for the purpose of study or translation, as it is accompanied by translations and notes in both English and Latin.

A more distinctive copy is found in the second volume of the manuscript known as the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*, now Dublin, RIA 23 O 48 (cat. 476), f. 22r-v (*F*): this is significantly reduced in length and preserves only part of the text. It breaks off after §7, thereby including the information concerning the prophecy of the mortality and the reasons for bringing it upon the Irish, but not the extended details on the prescribed fasts and the role of guarantors taken on behalf of the Irish. It could, of course, be the case that the scribe of *F* had no interest in the section which follows, and was only interested in the prophecy. However, the copy in *F* ends exactly at the page break of the text of *B*. I thus consider it more likely that the abbreviation was a scribal oversight, whether on the part of the scribe of *F* or of an intermediate copyist.

The last copy is in Dublin, RIA MS 24 P 9 (cat. 739), pp 89-104 (*P*⁹), which is a fairly modernised seventeenth-century version of *B*, but freely adapted and abridged by its scribe.¹⁰⁴⁷

No new edition of the text has appeared since that of Stokes. The current edition seeks to address this lack, and presents the text from the two earliest manuscripts with *B* used as the *codex optimus*. The variants from *F* are presented in the apparatus and are translated where appropriate in footnotes to the translation of the main text.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ó Muraíle, N., *The Celebrated Antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Fírhisigh (c. 1600-1671): His Lineage, Life and Learning*, Maynooth Monographs 6, 2nd edn (Maynooth: An Sagart, 2002), pp. 78-80, 372.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Pers. comm. I am very grateful to Dr Ó Muraíle for discussing this topic with me. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7, and Ó Riain, P., *Corpus genealogiarum sanctorum Hiberniae* (Dublin: DIAS, 1985), pp. xlvi-xlvii.

¹⁰⁴⁷ I owe the discovery of this copy to Caoimhín Breatnach. This text, however, falls outside the scope of the current edition.

Principles of the Edition

In the following, I have used *B* as the *codex optimus* and collated it with *F*. Since *T* is much later than the other two manuscripts and represents a direct copy of *B*, its value for this edition lies primarily in its function as a secondary witness. It has been consulted mainly where readings in *B* were unclear. For this edition I have chosen to follow for the most part the structure of the text in *B*, in which paragraphs are clearly demarcated and indicated by coloured capitals. Somewhat smaller coloured capitals indicate the start of most of the sentences. These are represented in the text by bold lettering. I have been guided by these as well, except where they appear in error or where the sentence structure has been confused. It has been necessary on occasion to alter a sentence where capitalisation appeared to be lacking or superfluous. This was the case in §8 where the sentence has been broken up to create a new one starting *Nach*, in §9, l. 98, where a new sentence now begins with *Ar*, and in §14 l. 138 where the new sentence now begins with *Co*. Likewise, *ar* in §2 l. 14 and *in* in §5 l. 47 now no longer begin a sentence with a capital, as in the manuscript, but have been joined to the preceding sentence. Since the fourth paragraph in *B* is not broken up and seems excessively long in comparison to the other paragraphs, I have in this case adopted the paragraph division of *F*, which is equally well structured. As a result, §§4-6 below represent what appears as a single paragraph in *B*.

I have supplied italics to mark letters represented in the manuscript by ambiguous abbreviations, but not ligatures. Where the *punctum delens* appears on consonants other than *n*, *s*, or *f*, it is expanded as lenition. Common names such as ‘Patrick’ and ‘Ireland’, as well as the words *aíne* and *ernaigthe*, which occur very frequently, have also been silently expanded.¹⁰⁴⁸ Punctuation is loosely based on that of the manuscript, though in the interests of presenting a text which is readable to a modern audience, additional punctuation has been added. Capitalisation of personal names, countries and places is my own. Where significant alterations to the manuscript’s readings have been made, they are listed in the apparatus.

The text has not been normalised, but to aid understanding I have supplied hyphens to distinguish compound verbs, enclitic pronouns, and mutations. I have

¹⁰⁴⁸ §2 provides the scribe’s spelling for Patrick as *Patraic* and §3 provides his spelling of *ernaigthe*. Initially *aíne* is only abbreviated by an *n*-stroke, but later in the text it is abbreviated *.a*. Similarly, *ernaigthe* is initially abbreviated by a lenition mark only, but as *ernẽ* or *erẽ* when it becomes more frequent.

refrained from altering or correcting the text in any significant way, but instead the following sigla have been used for editing: [] for editorial insertion or emendation; < > for missing or partially effaced characters. In addition the following sigla are used in the apparatus: () for suggested editorial deletion; ` ´ for insertions by the scribe; x < y for indicating a scribal alteration from y to x;] is placed after the lemma.

The apparatus only provides significant variants, i.e. those not merely orthographic. This excludes from the apparatus variants in the writing of lenition or vowels in unstressed final syllables unless these are syllable-final and serve to indicate inflexion. Variants from *F* have only been provided where they represent significant variations. This excludes the greater part of the many modernisations and the occasional orthographical oddities which can be found in *F*, such as *naeimh* for *noim*, *an* for *in*, *gach* for *cech*, *gan* for *cen*, *teneadh* for *tened*, *ataidh* for *athach*, *shargarbaigh* for *sacarbaic*, *eccraibfeacha* for *écraibdechu*. In the case of editorial emendation, a reference to the manuscript form is included in the apparatus, though not where letters have only been inserted or added in addition to and without replacing a manuscript reading. In such cases, square brackets indicate the addition.

Text

§1 *Visio quam uidit Adamnanus uir Spiritu sancto plenus, hæc est, angelus Domini dixit hæc uerba eius illum:*

- 3 “Vae, uae, uae uiris Hiberniae insolae mandata Domini transgredientibus!
Vae regibus et principi[pi]bus qui non di[li]gunt ueritatem et diligunt
iniquitatem et rapinam! Vae doctoribus qui non docent ueritatem et
6 consen[t]iunt uanitatibus imperfectorum! Vae meretricibus et peccatoribus
qui sicut foenum et stipula concremabuntur a bura ignita in anno bisextili
et embolesmi et in fine circuli et in Decollatione Iohannis Bautistae! IN
9 sexta feria autem plaga conueni[e]t in illo anno, nisi deuota poenitentia
prohibuerit, ut Níniuetae fecerunt!”

§ 1 om. F 4 di[li]gunt] dirigunt B 7 a bura ignita] aburaignata B.

- §2 IS ead inso tra forus 7 dliged anmchairdesa fer nErenn fria lesugud a
12 corp 7 a n-anmann, fri hindarbud plag 7 genti 7 dunibad díb, amal ro
foillsiged do Adamnán húa Thinne a comarli Dé ocus Patraic, co robud 7 co
n-erfuaccra ina ndochum, arro fochlit iarum firu Erenn 7 ara nd-aigset co
15 leir in dunibad ticfa doib minas bera trocaire Dé for culu 7 itche Patraic
frisin Duilemain. Ticfa tra cech duinebad i ndiaid araile doib co dunibad na
feli Eoin. IS for Patraic didiu is mó ata neméli airchisechta fer nErenn, uair is
18 é ro erb in Coimdiu dia tesorcain for gentlidecht 7 idaladrud 7 amiris. Is é
bus brethem 7 bus erlabraid doib i llou bratha. Ocus didiu is e na leic plag
thened ina ndochumm for airchisecht dia corpaib 7 dia n-anmanduib.

11 Is – tra] [IS] e ni ata ann so F 12-13 ro foillsiged – Adamnán] ro
foillsieadh d’Aghamhnan naemh F 13 Dé ocus] omitted F 14 erfuaccra]
furoghra F 14 ndochum] ndochuma F 14 ar] Ar B 14 after Erenn add uile F
14 ara nd-aigset co] aro innsaidhfí do F 15 after culu add iad F 16 Ticfa]
Oir tiucfaidh F 16 tra] iarumh F 17 didiu] immorro F 17 neméli
airchisechta] neimhela 7 oircisicht F 18 ro erb – amiris] ro ordaidh in
coimghi diana teasargain ar geinntlighicht 7 a ridhla druagh 7 ar diabultacht
F 18 Is é] 7 is se F 19 erlabraid] irbabraidh F 19 Ocus didiu] omitted F 19 e]
se F 19 after e add dono Padraic F 19 na leic plag] nach liginn an plaigh F
20 for] ar F.

- 21 **§3 Attat** didiu noim Erenn oc neméli frisin Coimdid co tísad in plag do
 glanad a n-eclas for mét a n-anannaic 7 a celg 7 a cosnuma in[n]a popul fil
 indib. **Ar** thorud aine 7 ernaigthe na noem is ed chaithit na popuil 7 na cind
 24 ecrabdechú cona lece-sen na noemu do thorruma a relced nach a n-
 adnocul. **Ar** toegat na noim in cech lathi 7 .xii. aingel i comitecht cech noim
 do chelebrad cech entratha oca n-ecalsib ic atach Dé tar cend a manach. **Ar**
 27 tecaít a n-anmánda-sein beos coa n-adnaicthe. **Ar** is e-sin in cetramud inad
 torramus in animm iar scarad fria a corp .i. loc a gene 7 loc a bais, loc a
 baisti 7 loc a hadnaicthe [i]na húir mainche dilis.

21 Attat] Air atait *F 21* didiu] *omitted F 21 after* Erenn *add* uile *F 21* oc
 neméli] ag nemhelaidh *F 21 after* Coimdid *add* da urail *F 22* eclas]
 eclasadh *F 22* for mét] aroim *F 22 after* met *add* a peccad 7 *F 22-3* in[n]a
 popul fil indib] **Oir** na popuil filit isna heaclaisibh-sin *F 23 after* noem *add*
 da creidid *F 23* is ed chaithit] as iad-sin caithit *F 23* 7 na cind] *omitted F 24*
 ecrabdechú] ecrabdechú (a mbetha) *B 24 after* ecrabdechú *add* aingighi
 mar cuid *F 24* cona lece-sen] conach leigid *F 24 after* cona lece-sen *add*
 an lucht ecrabfeach-sin *F 24* noemu] næimh *F 24* nach] 7 *F 25* **Ar** toegat]
 oir tiaghaid *F 25 after* cech *add* oen *F 25 after* lathi *add* d'innsaighi a n-
 ecalsad 7 a n-adhnacuil fein *F 25* cech] gacha *F 26* chelebrad cech
 entratha] ceileabra an gach oen laithi *F 26* ic] occ *F 26 after* Dé *add* 7 a
 nDuileamhan *F 27* a n-anmánda-sein] na naim-sin *F 27* coa n-adnaicthe]
 cum a n-adhnacuil fein *F 28* torramus in animm] a ndenunn an aṁmuin
 toruma *F 28* iar scarad fria a corp] *omitted F 29* baisti] baistighe *F 29 after*
 dilis *add* fein *F*.

- 30 **§4 Tic** didiu in Coimdiu co .ix. ngradu nime in cech domnach do thabairt
 bennachtan forsin ṅdoman 7 forsna heclásib noemu 7 for cech n-oen bis hi
 sobés inntib .i. co ṅdéirc 7 trócaire, aine 7 irnaigthe 7 umalóit 7 aigedchaire,
 33 for cech flaith 7 for cech n-airchindech 7 for cech manach nos lessaig ar
 medon 7 dianechtair. **IN** eclas didiu [i]na bí tol Dé, a mbí cosnam 7 coscrad 7
 peccad, ní thecaít na nóim nó in aingil dia saigid-sium, acht airt ro-
 36 clúininter guth in chluic benair icon eclais, 7 do-berat tríst 7 míscaid, 7 berait
 a n-oráit uadib .i. forsna manchaib 7 forsna flathib 7 forsna hairchindechu
 díscailit in eclais ar medón 7 dianechtair, conid de-sin tothlaigit noim Erenn
 39 tidecht na dunibad acht Patraic nama.

30 didiu in Coimdiu] dono an t-athair neamhdha 7 an t-ændiadh
 uilecumachtach *F 30* ngradu] ngradhaibh *F 31* bennachtan forsin] a

beannacht forsa *F 31* heclasib noemu] næmecailsib *F 31-2* hi sobés inntib]
 co sobesach isna *hecailsibh* 7 isin domhun co leir .i. cu glan *F 32* ndéirc]
 deiseirc *F 32-3* trócaire – aigedchaire] trocaire 7 co n-umholoid 7 co n-aine
 7 co nn-earnaigthi 7 cu carghusaibh 7 co cataire co leir *F 33* for⁽¹⁾] Do-beir se
 hi for *F 33-4* nos lessaig ar] nos leasaidínn a *F 34* didiu] iarum *F 34* [i]na bí]
 agnach bi *F 34* after Dé add ga denum inti 7 *F 34* a mbí] aca mbi *F 34*
 cosnam 7] *om. F 35* peccad] peccad 7 *F 35* nó in aingil] *om. F 35* dia saigid-
 sium] dia soichin-sin *F 35* after acht add an *F 36* ro-clúinnter] ro-cluinet *F*
36 chluic benair icon] cluin bentar annsan *F 36* after eclais add 7 mar do-
 cluinit an chlog anait 7 *F 36* tríst 7 míscaid] *om. F 37* a n-oráit] a
 meannachtain *F 37* .i.] 7 do-beruit a mallachtain *F 38* hairchindechu]
 hoircinneachuib *F 38* díscailit] neoch disgailus *F 38* de-sin] aire-sin *F 39*
 after Erenn add uile *F 39* tidecht] tiachtain *F 39* after dunibad add a n-
 Erinn *F 39* acht] acht ma *F*.

§5 IS dífaisnesi tra, 7 is dofulachtu in plág thicfa and mine foichligther co
 lléir .i. lasar thened, luathaigther athach ngáithe glanfus Eirinn aniardes, 7 is
 42 í insin tene loiscfes teora cetraimi fer nErenn fri prapad súla, firu, mná,
 macu sceo ingena, cen chomand, cen cóibsin, cen sacarbaic. Oen do cét dib
 namá dochumm nime, acht a n-ifrind tiagat uli, 7 do-géna dúbluaitriud dia
 45 corpaib, co ndath in guail fora n-anmanna thall. Ni ba dín sóethu didiu don
 cetraimti fhuicfes in dunibad-sin dia éis hi tír nErenn, ar bid tanaise do
 dígail lathi bratha in dígal dos-bera Dia for firu Erenn in amsir in dunibad-
 48 sin, in tan tra na tabair plag *eile* dia timorcain acht caisar thened do neim
 pheni ifrin do loscad a corp 7 a n-anmand. Ocus didiu génti naro chretset
 cid itir co n-aicned démna hi corpaib na ndóine-sin do thidecht dia n-innrud
 51 iar sin.

40 dofulachtu] dofulaing *F 40* thicfa] tiucfus *F 40* after thicfa add a nErinn
 tre guidhi na næmh *F 41* .i.] 7 is mur so tiucfus si amal *F 41* lasar] *MS* lasar
41 luathaigther] a[s] cusmail a luas re *F 41* after ngáithe add ngeire
 nghairbthreínigh ac sguabadh 7 *F 41* glanfus] ac glanad *F 41* after Eirinn
 add roimpi ghuraib cusmail reisin ngæith-sin an lasair teíneadh-so *noc* tic *F*
41 after aniardes add co ndirech *F 42* is í insin tene loiscfes] as i-sin an tine
noc loiscg[f]es *F 42* fer nErenn] *om. F 42* after prapad add na *F 42* after
 súla add do fearuibh Eirenn itir *F 43* cóibsin] coibsen *F 43* Oen do cét] NI
 mo na aen don cét *F 43* after dib add sin uile do riacht *F 44* namá] *om. F*
44 acht] after acht add as *F 44* do-géna] do-dena *F 45* after corpaib add a
 fus *F 45* co ndath] 7 dath *F 45* anmanna] anmannaibh *F 45-6* Ni –

cetraimti] IS e-so med an uilc tiucfus don tsæth-sin co ceithir**nib** do lu[*cht*] (MS lus) F 46 cetraimti] cetraim`t`i B 46 *after* dunibad *omit* -sin F 46 dia] da F 46 ar] uair F 47 *after* lathi *add* an F 47 dos-bera] do-bera F 47 *after* Erenn *add* aris F 48 in tan] IN B 48 *before* in tan *add* Oir F 48 tra] *om.* F 48 na tabair] nach tabair F 48 plag] plaig F 48 acht] *om.* F 48 *after* thened *add* dofulaing F 48 do neim pheni ifrin] do aicgneadh 7 do cosmailus peine ifrinn F 49 a n-anmand] anmann F 49 didiu] dono F 49-50 genti – démna] gach neach nach creidinn don lucht-sin ceana biaidh aicgnad deamhan F 50 do thidecht] ac tiachtain F 50 *after* innrud *add* do gnath F 51 iarsin] ann-sin F.

§6 Hit e tra dethbere dos-bera in plág-sin fo thír nErenn .i. díth cretmi 7 irse 7 adartha Dé isna thuathaib, amal ro fácaib Pátraic leo, 7 díth sosce**la** 7 a
54 forcetail 7 a timna 7 timthirecta na noem isna heclasib. Ar ro lensat fir Erenn in gentlidecht doridisi amal cétna bui ria cretem, riasiú tísed Pátraic, acht naro adairset ídlu namá. Ar buí éthech 7 déigbriathar oc géntiu 7 ní fhil
57 indíu, ocus cech olc do-gnítis na génti do-gnither uli i tír nErenn isin amsir-sea, acht na hadrat ídlu namá, acht chena do-gniat guin 7 gait 7 adaltras, 7 fingalu 7 duinorcain 7 esorcain chell 7 clerech, sáint 7 éthech 7 goéi 7 gúbreth
60 7 coscrad eclasi Dé, draidecht 7 géntlidecht 7 sénairecht, auptha 7 felmasa 7 fídlanna.

52 Hit – dethbere] Is e-so indeadh 7 deifer 7 dighultus F 52 dos-bera] do-bera F 52 in plág-sin] *om.* F 52 fo] for F 53 ro fácaib] ro fuair F 53 *after* Pátraic *add* ar tosaidh F 53 7] *om.* F 53 díth] Dith F 53 a] *om.* F 54 a timna 7 timthirecta] timna 7 timthirecta F 54 timthirecta] (a) timthirecta B 54 *after* heclasib *add* ar ceana F 54 Ar ro lensat] Ar doró leansat F 55 cétna – tísed] ro badur in cétuair tainic F 55 *after* Pátraic *add* da soghain F 56 ídlu] idla F 56 namá] n < m F 56-8 Ar – namá] *om.* F 59 fingalu] fingul F 59 *after* duinorcain *add* 7 duineathaighi F 59 *after* goéi *add* 7 belgeghuidhe 7 daíne F 59 gúbreth] gubreatha F 60 felmasa] feabuasa F.

§7 Nach olc didiu tresa mbuí dígal 7 plág 7 dunibad for cenelu doíne o thús
63 domain, ata sin uli i tír nErenn, conid abaid cech frithorcain do thidecht itir scamach 7 boár 7 dígbail toraid, 7 gorta 7 núna 7 dunibad minas troetha trócaire Dé tria athnugud a crethmi dona dóinib 7 tria itche Patraic forsin
66 Coimdid arco tísed a trocaire forru. [259a]

62 didiu] dano *F* 62 tresa mbuí] triasa raba *F* 62 plág] plaigh *F* 62 cenelu]
 cinel *F* 62 thús] tosach *F* 63 *after* domain *add* uair *F* 63 ata] atait *F* 63
 conid abaid] cona dhe-sin ataat *F* 63 thidecht] tiachtuin *F* 64 dígbail toraid]
 digbala gach toraidh *F* 64 7 núna] *om. F* 65 Dé] De-sin *F* 65-6 tria – forru] 7
 ítciadh Padraig forsan Duileamain 7 athnumh creidmhe do-*badh* ac na daínib
 ann-sin *F*.

§8 **IS** ead didiu cetharda timarnad o Dia 7 Patraic do breth na plaga for culu
 o feraib Erenn .i. tredan cecha tremis, 7 denum redi do amredib 7 dias cech
 69 eclasi De, do æs graid fri bathis 7 comaind 7 g<ab>ail n-ec[n]arci 7 *mac*cu do
 legend 7 soire domnaig. Croch Críst do foraire in ce<ch teg>dais cen bes
 creitem i n-Erinn. It e tra .iii. heteri gabar dar cend in Choimded fri
 72 <din>gbail cecha tedmma dib guras comailter na timna-sa .i. Petur apstal 7
 Muri Og 7 Michel archaangel.

§9 **IS** he tra tosach in cetramad timna do-ratad o Dia 7 o Pátraic co firu
 75 Erenn .i. tredan cecha tremis fri haine 7 fri hiraigthe, 7 denum redi do
 amredib, ar is í lubair as dech la Dia do-gnither i talum. **IS** e tra in tredan
 dligthech do-gnither fri tidecht genti nó dunibad nó angcis for doine nó
 78 cetra nó torthi .i. teora laa co n-aidchib cen dig cen biad dona n-anmanna
 biu, *itir* doine 7 cetra; do neoch dib is forglide cidtus dia ticfa a denum. **Ar**
 nis fil do plaig nó dunibad for bith nachus bera sin for culu, acht corup leir
 81 guidter Dia occai. **Mad** fri hécin moir didiu tuaslaicthir i mmedon in tredain-
 sin; híccaid didiu laa imm aidche mad do-gnither lubair i suidib do drochtib
 7 tocraib inntib.

79 ticfa] ti`c`fa *B*.

84 §10 **IS** ann tra dlegur in cétna tredan do gres ma[ni] chumscaigid echen .i.
 in cétna aine iar n-init chorgais ghemrid. In tredan tanaisi tra in chetaine iar
 n-init chorgais erraig. **IN** tres tredan in cétna iar cingcidis. **IN** cetramad
 87 tredan in cetaine iar taite fhogamair. Troscad *imorro* i féoil Eoin Baup^tist
 do gres, uair is ann frisa-hicthar in dunibad do thidecht. Nach æn tra
 femidfes na trednu-sa ar scís aine 7 ernaigthe 7 adartha Dé 7 lessa a anma
 90 fodesin at-renat boin co n-uingi as cech urthobach bus tresi 7 bus nesa doib
 bes in cech thuaith, 7 ni fhuigbe lesa nó adnaicthe co cend mbliadna la
 miscaid cech oin bes isin tredan-sin i cinaid in tredain do lott do, 7 didiu ni
 93 bí sær forsna trednu-sa, acht æs galair 7 noidin 7 senori na fuilnget aine 7

oes coimeta cetra 7 cech tharba olchena 7 cid iat-side áinit 7 figlit co medon
 96 lai amal oes bis isin tredan. Soire tresi tra resin tredan 7 ina diaid di cech
 oen bís and.

84 cétna] *cét`na` B.*

§11 IS dar sarugud Dé 7 Patraic *immorro* da cech duine erfes a cheli ann im
séta nó im biad, 7 berid miscaid cech oín bís isin tredan 7 as-ren boin co n-
 99 uingi int-i do-bera nach ceist nó caingen do neoch bís ann, 7 smachtaigter
 comanad furri co cend mbliadna. Ar ní dlegar ní *eile* do imradud isin amsir
 do-berar do Dia fri haine 7 irnaighi, acht less anma *itir* precept 7 celebrad .i.
 102 cétn slechtain fri Biait 7 Magnificat 7 *Benedictus* 7 *Miserere* mei *Dominus*, 7
 crosfigell fri himmund Patraic, 7 immund na n-apstal 7 lamchomairt fri
 Himmnum dicat 7 imnum Míchil 7 slechtain uli fo tri hi forcend cech
 105 immuind 7 buailit a mbruinde fo tri la cech slechtain 7 at-berat uli: ‘Don-fair
 trocaire, a De, 7 ron be flaith nime, 7 don-ringbai Dia dind cech plag 7 cech
 dunibad.’ **IS** *iarum* con-ocbat a llamu dochumm nime, 7 dos-berut benachtu
 108 for Dia 7 Patraic co noemu Erenn, 7 for cech n-anmain bis oc tinol na
 tre<d>an-sa, *itir* uathad 7 sochaide, 7 cech itge chuinchit ina degaid co Dia 7
 Patraic do-berair doib, uair dos-beir Dia doib cech ní thurit tri aine 7
 111 ernaighi.

§12 IS tria aine tucad do thuaith Dé tidecht tria Muir *Ruad* cossaib tirmaib
 .i. triasin aine a mbui Moysi tria forcongra Dé fair. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaighi tra
 114 do-ratad in muireoin, .i. manda, do nim doib dia sasad isin dithrub, coro
 shærustar .x. mbliadna cen lubair cen sæthar iat. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaighi 7
 oibre Dé didiu do-ratad do Moysi acallaim in Choimded gnus do gnus dia
 117 tarut recht litre do. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaighi ro bui Moysi .xl. aidche cen dig
 cen biad i sleib Sína mac nIsrahel. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaighi tra ro mebaid in
 cath ré Moysi for tuathu Amalech, uair in tan con-ócbad Moysi a lamu hi
 120 crosfigill fri Dia no muided forsna gentib. **IN** tan *immorro* no leced sís la
 thoeb no mhuided fora muinntir fesin, conid de-sin do-bertha ailge arda
 foa doitib coru scaich slaide na ngenti, 7 ro soud in grian on trath co araile
 123 tria ernaighi Moysi a oenur. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaighi tra ro scail sruth
 Iordanen re tuaith De co nderna all slébe de don dara leith 7 co luid in leth
 n-aill i mMuir Mairb.

114 .i. manda] ‘.i. manda’ B.

- 126 **§13 IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro selaig lesáu maic Nuin .uii. tuatha Cannán 7
ron bris in cathraig .i. Herico cor thuitset na .uii. muir batar immpe tria
ernaigthe lesáu 7 tuathi Dé conus farcaib *popul* na catrach forsin
129 lomthalmáin cen fáil impu 7 do-rochuir fo gín goei 7 chlodim in *popul*-sin
la tuaith De fri hoenlathi. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro sárad lesu maic Nuin
cona *popul* do chumachtu rig na n-Asardai, **[col. b]** conus tanic aingel De do
132 chathugud friu *tara* cend coro sálaig-sium .lxxx. ar .c. míle díb fri prapud
sula. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe didiu ro soerad Ionas faith a broind in míl moir
iarna *beth* tredenus ind, conro la in míl asa beolu i tracht mara Perss co luid
135 i crích Med do precept, nó co Ninuen amal ro herbad de.

127 Herico] Her`í'co *subscript B* **19** chlodim] chlod`í'm *subscript B* **130**
tuaith] tua`í'th *subscript B*.

- §14 IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro soerad Daniel faith do chuithe na leoman,
conid e praind do-ratad co Daniel on Choimdid iarsan aine dos-gní .i. araile
138 fáith oca raba methel oc beín phupu na fínemnu, 7 Bacucc a ainmm in
fátha-sin. Co lu[i]d in fáid la biad dia methil conus tanic aingel ina agaid 7
tuarcaib lais in fáith cusin mbiad 7 oenfoiltne dia folt-sum i llaim in aingil co
141 dú a mbuí Daniel isin cuthi leoman curas caithset hi n-oentaíd .i. Daniel 7 na
leomain. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro soertha na tri macu asin surnd tened
.i. Setrach, Mísácc, Abdinócc, ro cuirít la Nabcudon isin tenid uair naro
144 adairset a delb-som. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro soerad Nadcudón rig na
Babiloine don mheracht forsa mbui .i. .uii. bliadna *itir* na halltu isin dithreb
conus fácaib a chumachtu 7 a rige dia eis. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro
147 soerad *popul* Ninuen don phlaig ro tomaithed forru i cind .ix. laa .xl. coro
marb *fichit* míle ar .c. míle díb, co ndernsat dubthredan *itir* dóine 7 cethra
dia tuaslucad.

146 dithreb] dith`r`eb *superscript B* **148** fichit] .xx`it` *superscript B*.

- 150 **§15 IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe tra ro tullit .xu. bliadna fora soeghul do Ezecias
maic Achaist rig *Israhel* iarna rad fris o Dia at-belad don galur bui fair, conid
de-sin teit grian for culu dochum thurgabala tria *nert* a ernaigthe-sium do
153 chomurtha a slanti 7 tormmaig a amsire iarum. **IS** tria aine 7 ernaigthe didiu
tucait cen[é]la na ndoine o chumachtu Diabuil iar mbeth do *Críst* .xl. lathi
co n-aidche cen díg cen biad oc cathugud fri Diabul dar cend clanni Adaim,
156 nó is ar airchisecht do-rigne *Críst* insin cómad ead clethi soethair cech
duine, aine 7 ernaigthe, fria cech n-écin don-icfad do nim 7 talmain doib.

154 cen[é]la] cendla *B* **154** Diabuil] diabu`i`l *subscript B*.

§16 IS tria aine ⁊ ernaigthi didiu do-berair d'anmain cech duine uair n-
159 etsechta a tarrachtain do bas oc aine ⁊ oc e<r>naigthi, uair nach firt n-
adamrai do-rigne isin domun-sa ⁊ nach plag ros dingaib do doínib ⁊ cethraib
is tria aine ⁊ ernaigthi ro hir Dia cech ní. Fo bíth is muir dithoglaide re togail
162 do gres in aine, ⁊ is sét díriuch dochumm flatha nime, ⁊ is athnuidiugud
cairdesa fri Dia. Is tormach n-etla ⁊ derci i cride cech duine do-gena amal
do-ruirmissiumm.

Translation

§1 *The vision which Adomnán, a man full of the Holy Spirit, saw, that is, the angel of the Lord said these words of his to him:*

‘Woe! Woe! Woe to the men of the island of Ireland transgressing the Lord’s commandments! Woe to the kings and princes who do not love truth and love injustice and plunder! Woe to the teachers who do not teach truth and consent to the folly of the imperfect! Woe to the harlots and sinners who will be burned up like hay and stubble by a fire kindled in an embolismic leap year and at the end of a cycle and on the [Feast of] the Decollation of John the Baptist! On a Friday in this year a plague will come, unless devout penance will have prevented it, just as the Ninevites did!’

§2 This, then, is the principle and law of spiritual direction of the men of Ireland, for the benefit of their bodies and souls, for the banishing of plagues and heathens and mortality from them, as was revealed to Adomnán¹⁰⁴⁹ úa Tinne through the counsel of God and Patrick, with a warning and a message to them, that the men of Ireland¹⁰⁵⁰ should beware and fear zealously the mortality¹⁰⁵¹ which will come to them unless God’s mercy and Patrick’s prayer to the Creator turn it back. One mortality after the other, then, will come to them up to the mortality of the Feast of John [the Baptist]. It is Patrick, then, who bears the chief responsibility for sorrowful pleading for mercy¹⁰⁵² for the men of Ireland, because it is he whom the Lord has entrusted with saving them from paganism, idolatry and unfaith.¹⁰⁵³ It is he who will be their judge and advocate on Doomsday. And it is he, moreover,¹⁰⁵⁴ who does not allow the plague of fire to [come] to them out of compassion for their bodies and their souls.

§3 The saints¹⁰⁵⁵ of Ireland, however, are beseeching the Lord¹⁰⁵⁶ that the plague might come to cleanse their churches on account of the amount¹⁰⁵⁷ of guilts and treacheries and contentions of the people who are in them. For the fruit of the fasting and the prayers of the saints is what the people and impious leaders consume,¹⁰⁵⁸ so that they¹⁰⁵⁹ do not allow the saints to attend their cemeteries or their graves. For the

¹⁰⁴⁹ *F* ‘the holy Adomnán’.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *F* ‘all the men of Ireland’.

¹⁰⁵¹ *for* ‘fear – mortality’ *F reads* ‘for the plague would diligently come’.

¹⁰⁵² *F* ‘pleading and mercy’.

¹⁰⁵³ *F* ‘whom the Lord has commanded to save them from paganism and from idolatry and from sorcery’.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *F* ‘it is he, moreover, Patrick’.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *F* ‘All the saints’.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *F adds* ‘to urge him’.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *F* ‘from the great abundance of their sins and’.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *F* ‘For the people who are in these churches for the fruit of fasting and the prayers of the saints in whom they believe, it is these which the impious, wicked people consume as [their] portion’.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *F* ‘that crowd of the impious’.

saints, with twelve angels in the company of each saint, come every¹⁰⁶⁰ day¹⁰⁶¹ to celebrate every single canonical hour¹⁰⁶² at their churches, praying to God¹⁰⁶³ on behalf of their monks. For their souls¹⁰⁶⁴ still come to their¹⁰⁶⁵ graves. For this is the fourth place the soul visits after separating from its body, that is, the place of its birth and the place of its death, the place of its baptism and the place of its burial in the soil of its own community.

§4 The Lord¹⁰⁶⁶ then, with the nine grades of heaven, comes every Sunday to give a blessing¹⁰⁶⁷ to the world and to the holy churches and to everyone who is of good conduct in them,¹⁰⁶⁸ that is, with charity and with mercy, fasting and prayer and humility and hospitality,¹⁰⁶⁹ to¹⁰⁷⁰ every ruler and to every superior and to every monk who betters them within and without. As for the church, however, in which God's will is not,¹⁰⁷¹ wherein are contention¹⁰⁷² and disturbance and sin, the saints or the angels¹⁰⁷³ do not come any nearer to it than as far as the sound of the bell, [which is] struck at the church, is heard,¹⁰⁷⁴ and they put a curse and a malediction [on them],¹⁰⁷⁵ and take their prayer¹⁰⁷⁶ from them,¹⁰⁷⁷ that is, on the monks and on the lords and on the superiors who divide the church from within and without, so that for this reason the saints¹⁰⁷⁸ of Ireland desire the coming of the mortality,¹⁰⁷⁹ except only Patrick.

§5 It is unspeakable then, and unendurable, the plague which will come¹⁰⁸⁰ then, unless it is zealously heeded, that is,¹⁰⁸¹ a flame of fire, as swift as¹⁰⁸² a gust of wind¹⁰⁸³ which will cleanse¹⁰⁸⁴ Ireland¹⁰⁸⁵ from the southwest, and this is the fire

¹⁰⁶⁰ *F* 'every single'.

¹⁰⁶¹ *F* adds 'to [visit] their churches and their own graves'.

¹⁰⁶² *F* 'every single day'.

¹⁰⁶³ *F* adds 'and their Lord'.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *F* 'those saints'.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *F* 'their own'.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *F* 'the heavenly Father and the one omnipotent God'.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *F* 'his blessings'.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *for* 'in them, that is' *F* reads 'in the churches and in all the world, that is, with cleanliness and'.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *F* 'with Lenten fasts and with diligent vigil'.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *F* 'He brings it upon'.

¹⁰⁷¹ *F* 'is not being done'.

¹⁰⁷² *F* 'contention and' *omitted*.

¹⁰⁷³ *F* 'or the angels' *omitted*.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *F* 'they hear'.

¹⁰⁷⁵ *instead of* 'they give ... to them' *F* reads 'and as they hear the bell they stop'.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *F* 'blessing'.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *F* 'away from them and they put their curse'.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *F* 'all the saints'.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *F* adds 'to Ireland'.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *F* adds 'to Ireland through the prayer of the saints'.

¹⁰⁸¹ *F* adds 'and it is like this that it will come, like.'

¹⁰⁸² *F* 'and its speed is similar to'.

¹⁰⁸³ *F* 'sharp, rough, strong wind'.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *F* 'sweeping and cleansing'.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *F* adds 'before her so that this flame of fire is like that wind which comes straight'.

which will burn three fourths of the men of Ireland in the blink of an eye, men, women, boys and girls, without communion, without confession, without sacrament. Only one out of a¹⁰⁸⁶ hundred of them [will go]¹⁰⁸⁷ to heaven, but all go into hell, and it will make black ashes of their bodies,¹⁰⁸⁸ with the colour of coal on their souls beyond. There will be no protection from hardship for the fourth¹⁰⁸⁹ which the mortality will leave behind in the land of Ireland, for second only to the punishment of Doomsday will be the punishment which God will bring down upon the men of Ireland¹⁰⁹⁰ at the time of that mortality, when¹⁰⁹¹ he does not bring any other plague to chastise them, except for¹⁰⁹² a hail¹⁰⁹³ of fire, of the poison of the torments of hell¹⁰⁹⁴ to burn their bodies and their souls. And indeed heathens who had never even believed at all, with the nature of demons¹⁰⁹⁵ in the bodies of those men, [are] to come¹⁰⁹⁶ to invade them¹⁰⁹⁷ after this.¹⁰⁹⁸

§6 These are the reasons¹⁰⁹⁹ that will bring that plague¹¹⁰⁰ upon the land of Ireland: that is, destruction of belief and faith and worshipping God amongst the people, just as Patrick had left [them] with them;¹¹⁰¹ and¹¹⁰² destruction of the gospel and its teaching and its commandments¹¹⁰³ and of ministering to the saints in the churches.¹¹⁰⁴ For the men of Ireland have followed paganism again as it was at first before the Faith, before Patrick came,¹¹⁰⁵ except only that they have not worshipped idols. For there was a false oath and a good word amongst the heathens and there is not today, and every evil which the heathens used to commit, all are committed in the land of Ireland at this time, except only that they do not worship idols.¹¹⁰⁶ However they commit wounding and theft and adultery, and kinslaying and manslaughter¹¹⁰⁷ and harrying churches and clerics, avarice and perjury and

¹⁰⁸⁶ *F* 'Not more than one out of a'.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *F* reads 'reached', see Notes.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *F* adds 'here'.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *for* 'There – fourth' *F* reads 'This is the amount of (the) evil which will come on account of that tribulation to the bands and the crowds'.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *F* adds 'once more'.

¹⁰⁹¹ *F* inserts 'when' before 'For'.

¹⁰⁹² *F* omits 'except for'.

¹⁰⁹³ *F* 'an unendurable hail of fire'.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *for* 'of the poison ... hell' *F* reads 'of the nature and likeness of the pain of hell'.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *for* 'heathens ... demons' *F* reads 'every one of those people who does not believe, moreover, there will be the nature of demons'.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *F* 'coming'.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *F* adds 'always to attack them'.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *F* 'then'.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *F* 'This is the meaning and cause and vengeance'.

¹¹⁰⁰ *F* 'he will bring'.

¹¹⁰¹ *F* 'just as Patrick had found with them at first'.

¹¹⁰² *F* omits 'and'.

¹¹⁰³ *F* 'teaching and commandments'.

¹¹⁰⁴ *F* adds 'besides'.

¹¹⁰⁵ *for* 'as it ... came' *F* reads 'as they were on the first occasion that Patrick came to them'.

¹¹⁰⁶ *F* omits this sentence.

¹¹⁰⁷ *F* adds 'secret murder'.

falsehood¹¹⁰⁸ and false judgement and overthrowing of God's church, druidry and paganism and augury, spells and charms, and divination.

§7 Any evil, then, through which there was punishment and plague and mortality upon the races of men from the beginning of the world, they are all in the land of Ireland so that every retaliation is ripe to come,¹¹⁰⁹ both cattle plagues and want of produce,¹¹¹⁰ and hunger and famine¹¹¹¹ and mortality, unless God's mercy abates them, on account of the people renewing their faith and through Patrick's prayer to the Lord that his mercy may come upon them.¹¹¹²

§8 These, then, are the four things commanded by God and Patrick in order to turn the plague back from the men of Ireland: that is, a three-day fast every three months; and 'making smooth from rough'; and two ordained men in every church of God for baptism, communion and singing requiems; and boys for studying; and Sunday free. Christ's cross [is] to be watched in every house for as long as faith is in Ireland. These, then, are the three guarantors taken on behalf of the Lord for warding off every pestilence from them, so that these commands may be fulfilled, that is, the apostle Peter and the Virgin Mary and the archangel Michael.

§9 This, then, is the beginning of the fourth command given by God and Patrick to the men of Ireland, that is, a three-day fast every three months for fasting and prayer, and 'making smooth from rough', for this is the work which God deems best [of that which] is done on earth. This, then, is the lawful three-day fast which is performed to prevent the coming of heathens or mortality or ailment on men or cattle or produce, that is, three days and nights without food or drink for the living creatures, be it men or cattle; for any of them [of whom it] is proven [that] he will be able to accomplish it. For there is no plague or mortality in the world which that will not turn back, provided that God is earnestly beseeched in it. If it be on account of great necessity, it is released in the middle of that fast; moreover, a day and a night pay for [it], if work be done in them then on bridges and causeways.

§10 This, then, is when the first three-day fast is always due unless necessity upsets it, that is, the first fast after the beginning of the winter Lent. The second fast, then, the Wednesday after the beginning of the spring Lent. The third fast, the Wednesday after Pentecost. The fourth fast, the Wednesday after the beginning of autumn. Moreover, [there should be] fasting always on the feast of John the Baptist, for it is then that the mortality is expected to come. Anyone who refuses these fasts on account of dislike of fasting and prayer and worshipping God and the care of his own

¹¹⁰⁸ *F* adds 'garbled prayer (?) and slavery (?)'

¹¹⁰⁹ *for* 'so that ... come' *F* reads 'so that it is as a result of that, that every retaliation is to come'.

¹¹¹⁰ *F* 'every produce'.

¹¹¹¹ *F* omits 'and famine'.

¹¹¹² *for* 'unless ... them' *F* reads 'unless God's mercy and Patrick's prayer to the Lord, and there being a renewal of belief among the people at that time, abates them.' *F* breaks off here.

soul, they pay a cow with an ounce [of silver] out of each levy which is strongest and nearest to them, which there will be in every tribe, and he will not get benefits nor gifts for a year with the curse of everyone who is [participating] in that fast, in atonement for his damaging the fast, and moreover no-one is exempt from these fasts, except for sick people and infants and old people who cannot endure a fast and those who herd cattle and perform any other useful labour; and even they fast and keep vigil until midday, like the folk who are keeping the fast. Three days' exemption, then, before and after the fast for everyone who keeps it.

§11 It is in violation of God and Patrick, moreover, for any man to refuse his friend valuables and food in it, and he carries the curse of everyone who is keeping the fast, and he who would bring any inquiry or suit against anyone who is keeping it, pays a cow with an ounce [of silver], and he is required to delay it for a year. For it is not allowed to think of any other thing, in the time given to God in fasting and prayer, other than the care of the soul, by preaching and celebrating the offices; that is, a hundred prostrations at the *Beati* and *Magnificat* and *Benedictus* and *Miserere mei Dominus*, and a cross-vigil with Patrick's hymn, and the hymn of the apostles and clapping the hands together at the *Hymnum dicat* and Michael's hymn, and three prostrations by all at the end of each hymn and they beat their breast three times at every prostration and all say: 'May mercy come to us, O God, and may we have the kingdom of heaven, and may God avert from us every plague and mortality'. After that they raise their hands to heaven and they give blessings to God and Patrick with the saints of Ireland, and to each soul which is in the assembly of these fasts, both individuals and groups, and every request they ask thereafter of God and Patrick is given to them, for God gives them everything they seek through fasting and prayer.

§12 It is through fasting that God's people were given passage through the Red Sea with dry feet, that is, through the fast which Moses kept on account of God's command to him. It is through fasting and prayer, moreover, that the sea-birds—that is, *manna*—were given to them from heaven to satisfy [their hunger] in the wilderness, so that they were freed from work and labour for ten years. It is through fasting and prayer and godly works that it was granted to Moses to speak with the Lord, face to face, when he gave him the law of scripture. It is through fasting and prayer that Moses was forty nights without drink or food on the mountain Sinai of the sons of Israel. It is through fasting and prayer, moreover, that Moses won the battle against the tribes of Amalek, for whenever Moses raised his hands in a cross-vigil towards God, the heathens were defeated. When, however, he let [them] down by his side, his own people were defeated, so that for this reason tall rocks were placed under his arms, until the slaughter of the heathens had ended, and the sun was turned from one day to the next through Moses' prayer alone. It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that he divided the river Jordan before God's people, so that he made a mountain cliff of one half of it and the other half went into the Dead Sea.

§13 It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that Joshua son of Nun defeated the seven tribes of Canaan and destroyed the city, that is, Jericho, so that the seven walls which were around her fell down through the prayers of Joshua and God's people, so that he left the people of the city on the bare ground without a covering around them and that people died by the edge of spear and sword at the hands of God's people in a single day. It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that Joshua son of Nun with his people was saved from the power of the king of the Assyrians when the angel of God came to fight against them (the Assyrians) on their behalf, so that he slew one hundred and eighty thousand of them in the blink of an eye. It is through prayer and fasting, moreover, that Jonah the prophet was freed from the belly of the great whale after being in it for three days until the whale cast [him] out of its mouth onto the shore of the Persian sea, and he went into the territory of the Medes to preach, or to Nineveh as he had been assigned to do.

§14 It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that Daniel the prophet was freed from the lions' den, and this is the meal that was given to Daniel by the Lord after the fast he performed, that is, a certain prophet had a band of workers reaping the shoots of the vines, and [Ha]bakkuk was the name of that prophet. And the prophet went with food to his workers, and an angel met him and he lifted up the prophet with the food, with a single hair of the hair on his head in the angel's hand, [bringing him] to where Daniel was in the lions' den and they ate [the food] together, that is, Daniel and the lions. It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that the three boys were released from the fiery furnace, that is, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were put in the fire by Nebuchadnezzar, because they did not worship his image. It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was freed from the derangement in which he was, that is, [he was] seven years among the wild animals in the wilderness, and he left his powers and his kingship behind him. It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that the people of Nineveh were saved from the plague, with which they were threatened at the end of forty-nine days, and which killed a hundred and twenty thousand of them, so that they kept a black three-day fast including people as well as cattle for their deliverance.

§15 It is through fasting and prayer, indeed, that Hezekiah son of Ahaz, king of Israel, earned fifteen years to be added to his life, after he was told by God that he would die of the sickness from which he suffered, so that for this reason the sun went back to sunrise through the strength of his prayer as a sign of his health and of the increase of his time thereafter. It is through fasting and prayer, moreover, that the races of mankind were released from the power of the Devil after Christ battled against the Devil for forty days and nights without drink or food on behalf of the children of Adam; or it is out of compassion that Christ did that, so that it is everyone's chief labour; fasting and prayer against every hardship which may come to them from heaven and earth.

§16 It is through fasting and prayer, moreover, that it is granted to the soul of every man that he be seized by death at the hour of his departure [whilst] fasting and praying, because any wonderful miracle which he has done in this world and any plague which he has warded off from men and cattle, it is through fasting and prayer that God has granted everything. Because fasting is always an indestructible rampart against destruction and a straight path towards the kingdom of heaven, and renewal of friendship with God. It is an increase in purity and charity in the heart of every man who will do as we have related.

Textual Notes

§1 *haec est*] The scribe here uses the abbreviation for *autem*, which is meaningless at this point. I take this to be an error: the scribe likely intended a similar form for *haec* (referring back to *visio*, f.),¹¹¹³ though the syntax would suggest that the original reading must have been the phrase *id est*. The reading *haec* is confirmed by *T* and hence adopted here.

§1 *dixit haec verba eius illum*] The word *eius*, abbreviated in the manuscript as *ə* is a little out of place here as one would expect *ad* as in *T*'s *ad illum*. Though *T* would appear to have the better grammatical reading, I am inclined to regard this as an improvement on the part of the scribe of that manuscript, who otherwise follows the *B* text extremely closely, rather than a reflection of the original. I have not been able to find any evidence that the siglum *ə*, or a similar siglum, can be used to represent *ad*. It seems to me more prudent, therefore, to follow the manuscript.

§1 *qui non di[l]igunt*] MS *dirigunt*. Stokes emended to *diligunt*, and I have decided to follow his example. The scribe uses the abbreviation for *quia* here, as in *qui non docent* and *quia sicut foenum*. *T* preserves the readings *qui ... qui ... quia*, though the scribe of *B* appears not to have differentiated between the two sigla. Both readings are possible, but I have adopted *qui* on the basis of the syntax.

§1 *circuli*] MS *c`i`culi* (superscript). Stokes edited this as *cycli*, in line with his interpretation of the word as meaning 'cycle', but there is no reason to diverge from the manuscript reading. Strictly speaking the abbreviation ought to be expanded **criculi*, but it is normal practice for the scribe of this manuscript. The cycle here referred to is a cycle of the calendar as discussed above. The word *circuli* is already used to indicate a (Paschal) cycle by Bede.¹¹¹⁴ The scribe uses an abnormally curled superscript *i* here, also found on *nisi*, which almost looks like the sigla for *-ur*.

§1 *stipula*] cf. *sicut stipulam* Exod. 15:7. The author frequently draws on Exodus in §12 below.

§1 *a bura ignita*] The word *bura* (if that is what it ought to be) is rather obscure and is referred to only once in the *Archive of Celtic Latin Literature*,¹¹¹⁵ that reference

¹¹¹³ Cf. Cappelli, A., *Dizionario di abbreviature latini ed italiani* (Milan: Hoepli, 1912), p. 156.

¹¹¹⁴ Bede, *HE* V.21.

¹¹¹⁵ Harvey, A., et al. (eds.), *Archive of Celtic Latin Literature*, CD-ROM (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994).

being to our text. A word *bura* is otherwise occasionally attested with the meaning ‘ploughbeam’ and once (as far as I am aware) with the meaning ‘shed’.¹¹¹⁶ However, neither of these would seem to apply here. Instead, John Carey has suggested to me that the word may be related to Hiberno-Latin *pira* and/or to the verb *comburo* ‘I burn’ (mistakenly analysed as *com-buro* rather than *comb-uro*). *Pira* occurs with the meaning ‘fire’ in, among other sources, Adomnán’s *Vita Sancti Columbae*, which describes how Laisrán *quasi quadam pira intrinsecus succensus iubet monachos a labore cessare* ‘as if kindled with an inward fire, ordered that the monks should cease work’;¹¹¹⁷ and in the hymn ‘*Cantemus in omni die*’, which includes the request *ut non possit flamma pirae nos dirae decipere* ‘that the flame of grim fire not be able to deceive us’.¹¹¹⁸

§1 *ut Nínivetae fecerunt*] See Jon. 2-3. The author returns to this subject in the *exempla* which follow the main body of the text.

§2 *Arro fochlit ... ara nd-aigset*] In his edition of *B*, Stokes translated this sentence ‘Now the men of Ireland have by their misdeeds completely deserved (?) and chosen (?) the mortality’. *DIL* s.v. *ar-foichlea* translates the first words in the same passage as ‘Let the men of Ireland diligently guard ...’. Though *ar-foichlea* ‘get ready, prepare’ is a possible candidate for this verb, its prototonic stem and later its derived simple verb are based on the prototonic form *airichl-*, so that one would expect Middle Irish *ro-airichl-* (as opposed to Old Irish *ar-roichl-*).¹¹¹⁹ A form with type II (proclitic) augment coupled with the preverbal particle *ar* is not attested in *DIL* (apart from the example here discussed). I think it therefore much more likely that the scribe intended a form of the simple verb *foichlid* derived from *fo-cíallathar*, prototonic *-foichl-* ‘pays heed; provides; prepares for; bewares, is on guard’. Unfortunately the form in question, *-fochlit*, is with its palatal ending somewhat problematic. One could read *ro fochlit* as a past (perfect) tense with (Late) Middle

¹¹¹⁶ It is glossed with this meaning in Horn, W.W. and E. Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), iii.145, and occurs in the *Consuetudines Corbeienses* (Directives of Adalhard of Corbie) translated by C. Jones in the same volume (pp. 91-130; cf. *PL* 105.543CD). The text reads: *Carra vero accipiant hortolani de bura omni anno secundum consuetudinem*, translated by Jones as ‘The gardeners should receive carts from the shed every year according to custom’ (p. 109).

¹¹¹⁷ Anderson and Anderson, *Vita Columbae*, pp. 56-7.

¹¹¹⁸ Bernard and Atkinson, *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, pp. i.34.

¹¹¹⁹ *DIL* *ra hairichlit* (*Mesca Ulaid*).

Irish passive 3pl. The problem with this interpretation is that the subject of the passive voice of this verb is traditionally the thing to be heeded or to prepare for,¹¹²⁰ i.e. it would seem inappropriate to take ‘the men of Ireland’ as the subject, unless we allow for the free translation ‘for the men of Ireland have been cautioned/put on their guard/warned’. Alternatively, the form could be interpreted as a 3pl. augmented jussive subjunctive, so that we ought to read ‘for the men of Ireland should heed/be on guard’. *F* reads *ro foichleat* in this position. As the clause stands, then, I take both verbs to be subjunctive. The use of acc.pl. *firu* here instead of regular nom.pl. *fir* is noteworthy as the noun *fer* typically retains the distinction between nom. and acc. very well, but the feature is not uncommon in Middle Irish.¹¹²¹

The syntax of this sentence is clearly a little confused. It is possible that the original exemplar read *ar(r)a fochlit* where the text now reads *Ar ro fochlit*, and I have edited the text accordingly. Both *B* and *F*, however, start a new sentence here in the manuscript, possibly due to having interpreted *ara* as the conjunction *ar*. This implies that the confusion likely arose in the common source. The scribe of *F*, however, did not recognise the second verb in the sentence, which he represents as *innsaidhfid*. This appears to be a garbled reading of *B*’s *arandaigset*, in which the scribe recognised a conjunction *ar* and a form of *innsaigid* ‘reach, attain, seek out’. He subsequently took *in duinebath* as this verb’s subject (rather than its object as in *B*) to read ‘that the mortality will diligently approach’.

§2 *idaladrud*] The scribe of *F* appears to have misread his exemplar and writes *aridhla druagh* for what must have been *ar idaladrud*; cf. *B*.

§3 *inna popul fil indib*] The scribe of *F* has broken up the sentence here and attached this part to the following sentence, resulting in a muddling of the sense (see the translation of *F* in the footnote). To add to the confusion, he appears to have intended to start a new sentence with *As*; but never coloured the capital. The sentence should in all likelihood be restored to read ‘For the fruit of fasting and the prayers of the saints in whom they believe, it is those which the impious, wicked people consume’.

¹¹²⁰ I owe this suggestion to John Carey. I would furthermore like to thank both Dr. Carey and Prof. Damian McManus for discussing the possibilities with me.

¹¹²¹ Cf. McCone, K., *A First Old Irish Grammar and Reader: Including an Introduction to Middle Irish*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts 3 (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, 2005), p. 180.

The use of the verb *caithid* ‘to consume’ in this context seems to have caused the scribes some confusion. Where *F* has added *aingighi mar cuid*, *B* reads *a mbetha*. Whilst *aingighi* is clearly an embellishment of *eccraibfeacha*, *mar cuid* appears to be an attempt at clarifying the meaning of *caithit*. The scribe of *B* interpreted *caithit* as the first part of the idiom *caithid ... bethaid* ‘to spend one’s life’ and consequently added the missing piece. Alternatively, John Carey has suggested to me that it could have been inserted into the text as a gloss on *thorud aine 7 ernaighi*. The evidence as to whether the two additions represent a somewhat garbled common exemplar appears inconclusive. The phrasing is not straightforward, and could have led each scribe independently to attempt to rectify the situation.

§3 *relced*] Normally gen.sg. *relec*. Stokes emends to *relce*, but the MS form is an acceptable Middle Irish gen.pl. dental ending and should be retained.¹¹²²

§3 *Ar is e-sin in cetramud inad torramus in animm*] The motif of the four places which the soul visits after death has been briefly discussed by Charles Wright, who provides an analogue from a manuscript with Celtic connections namely Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 279 (Tours region, s. ix²), pp. 186-7. The text and translation provided by Wright read:

Quattor modis anima uniuscuiusque uisitat post mortem: locum a quo [...] corpore, et locum sepulturae, et locum ubi in copore uenerat, et locum baptismi.

The soul of each person visits in four ways after death: it visits the place from which [it exited?] the body, and the place of burial, and the place where it came into the body, and the place of baptism.¹¹²³

§4 *do-berat ... forsna manchaib*] In this place the sentence structure is interrupted by the phrase *7 berait a n-oráit uadib*, after which the sentence picks up, not with the preposition *ó*, but with the preposition *for*, which fits best to the phrase *do-berat tríst 7 míscaid*. The intervening phrase was possibly originally an addition later copied

¹¹²² Cf. Breatnach, L., ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, in McCone, K., *et al.* (eds.), *Stáir na Gaeilge in Omós do Pádraig Ó Fiannachta* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, 1994), pp. 221-333, p. 246.

¹¹²³ Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 258. Wright refers to R. Sharpe’s discussion of the manuscript in ‘Gildas as a Father of the Church’, in Lapidge, M. and D. N. Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984), pp. 193-205, in which he notes that this section of the manuscript is a collection of penitential excerpts mostly deriving from the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, and further notes that the theme occurs in a marginal note to the *Te Deum Laudamus* on f. 11 of *B*.

into the text. Note that the scribe of *F* has sought to correct the flow of the sentence by changing the word order.

§5 *lasar thened*] In the manuscript (*B*) the first letter of *lasar* is coloured with red, but not capitalised. The colouring appears to be in error, possibly as a result of misinterpreting the *punctum* following .i. by the scribe who coloured the capitals. The syntax does not require a break here.

§5 *ac sguapadh F*] This is a reference to the legend of the *Scuap a Fánait* or ‘Broom out of Fánat’, which describes a fiery bolt or dragon passing over Ireland which will leave only a fourth of the people alive. There are various texts dealing with this tradition (many of which to appear in Carey *et al.*, *The End and Beyond*), but the most important one for comparison with the *Second Vision of Adomnán* is the verse prophecy ascribed to Mo Ling included in the *Lore of the Fiery Arrow*¹¹²⁴ which is preserved some 15 pages before our text in *B*, on p. 242.¹¹²⁵ The legend accompanying the poem states that the fire that will come on the feast of John the Baptist will come out of a dragon, living in Loch Bél Sét, which will come forward at the time of the prophecy. This fire is referred to as a ‘fiery arrow’.¹¹²⁶ The poem also contains a number of close parallels to our own text. Compare the *Second Vision*’s statement (§5) that

Oen do cét dib namá dochumm nime, acht a n-ifrind tiagat uli, 7 do-
géna dúbluaitriud dia corpaib, co ndath in guail fora n-anmanna thall.

with the following quatrain from the poem (§3):

Drem dhubh dhorcha bregus bruth,
at-belat fri briatra cruth.
Is æn do .c.aib namá
do neoch dib do-ernabha.¹¹²⁷

Though the verbal parallels are minor, the contents agree notably. The scribe of the *Second Vision* has commented on the notion of the *drem dhubh dhorcha*, the ‘dark, black crowd’, by explaining that the black colour of the souls comes from the black ashes which remain from their bodies (cf. the following note) and has preserved a

¹¹²⁴ So designated in *The End and Beyond*; it is called the *Legend of Loch Bél Sét* or *Loch Bél Dragain* in O’Curry, *Lectures*, pp. 426-8.

¹¹²⁵ A second copy exists in another RIA manuscript; see now Carey, ‘The Lore of the Fiery Arrow’ in *The End and Beyond*.

¹¹²⁶ Though these texts frequently merge existing traditions, the prose introduction to the poem suggests that the ‘Broom’ and the ‘Arrow’ were conceived as separate occurrences.

¹¹²⁷ Carey, *loc. cit.*

variant of the dramatic statement that only one out of hundreds will survive. Note here also how a misinterpretation or misspelling of the poem's *cétaib* could have resulted in the *cét dib* of the Second Vision. §5, moreover, describes the plague which will come as a

lasar thened, luathaigther athach ngáithe glanfus Eirinn aniardes, ⁊ is í
insin tene loiscfes teora cetraimi fer nErenn fri prapad súla, firu, mná,
macu sceo ingena, cen chomand, cen cóibsin, cen sacarbaic.

Here the scribe paraphrases the second stanza of the poem, which states that the plague¹¹²⁸ will come from the southwest and will mercilessly kill nearly everyone in its path, without confession or sacrament. The phrase *loiscfes teora cetraimi fer nErenn* echoes rather the prose introduction to the poem, which reads (in *B*) *marbus teora ceathraime fer ndomain iter mnai ⁊ mac ⁊ ingen*. This confirms that the author of the *Second Vision of Adomnán* was indeed familiar with the whole text—or a similar enough version of it. The second stanza of the poem here referred to is, incidentally, cited in the notes to *Félire Óengusso*.¹¹²⁹

The introduction to the *Second Vision* is, moreover, closely paralleled in stanzas five and seven (the final stanza) of the poem. This can be seen in the following lines from the Latin introduction to the *Second Vision*:

Vae, uae, uae uiris Hiberniae insolae mandata Domini
transgredientibus!

... concremabuntur a bura ignata in anno bisextili et embolesmi et in
fine circuli et in Decollatione Iohannis Bautistae! IN sexta feria autem
plaga conveni[e]t in illo anno, nisi deuota poenitentia prohibuerit.

The exclamations of woe opening our text mirror the exclamations starting with *mairg* found in stanza five and seven, and the poem's phrase *Mairg na fochlither in pláig!*¹¹³⁰ is echoed in the phrase *mine foichligther co lléir* (§5 above) and elsewhere in the text. The scribe could also have drawn the requirement that the year of the plague will be bissextile from the poem's *I mbia bliadain bisexa*.¹¹³¹ Yet, whilst the *Second Vision*'s reference to Friday could be explained by the scribe's interpretation

¹¹²⁸ *tress B*. Translated 'contention' by Carey and 'assault' by O'Curry, *Lectures*, p. 427.

¹¹²⁹ Stokes printed the text as it appears in University College Dublin MS Franciscan A 7: *A feil Eoin ticfa in tres / sirfess Erinn anairdhes, / draic lonn loiscfes cach conic / cen comann, cen sacarbaic* (Stokes, *Félire Óengusso*, pp. 190-91).

¹¹³⁰ §5, Carey, *loc. cit.*

¹¹³¹ As in *B*. RIA D.iv.2 reads *a mbia bliadain bisecca*.

of the poem's *ain for ain* (*ain* can be read both as 'fast' and as 'Friday'),¹¹³² the notion that the year ought to be an embolismic one is not mentioned in the poem. Thus, while it seems reasonable to infer that the poem served as a source of inspiration for the introduction and for paragraph five of the *Second Vision of Adomnán*, it cannot have been its only source. Rather, this suggests that both texts drew independently on an existing tradition. More research is needed before any definite conclusions can be drawn.

§5 *co ndath in guail fora n-anmanna*] The colour of souls in the afterlife is a common allegorical *topos* in vision literature and related literature. The souls are thought to bear the sins committed in life with them as visible black stains. The colour of the soul thus represents the character of the soul and may vary from bright white to black as coal, as described here. Similar examples may be found elsewhere, in the texts called *The Two Deaths* and *A Soul Freed by Prayer*.¹¹³³ The blackness of sin or the whiteness of purity can also be manifested as a cloak worn by the soul, as in *The Dialogue of the Body and the Soul*.¹¹³⁴

§5 *co ceithirrib F*] The phrase is evidently a corruption of *cetramad*, possibly due to the misinterpretation of a scribal abbreviation. I have not, however, found any instances of that word with metathesis such as that in the present instance.

§6 *ro lensat fir Ereinn in gentlidecht doridaisi*] The statement that Ireland reverted to paganism is remarkable to say the least. It is probably best understood in light of the political turmoil that preceded the reform movement of the twelfth century.¹¹³⁵ The annals of the eleventh century are in effect a relentless list of cattle-raids, murders, blindings and battles. The increasing secularisation of the Church, which would give rise to the reform councils only decades later, should also be taken into account. That is not to say, however, that this text should be read as reformist, but rather as an expression of collective concern. In the face of disaster, the rhetoric of sin and penance is often employed as a means of accounting for it and of redeeming oneself from it.

¹¹³² See §7 and the accompanying note to *ain* below.

¹¹³³ See the editions of these texts by Katja Ritari and John Carey in *The End and Beyond*.

¹¹³⁴ For this see John Carey's new edition in *The End and Beyond*.

¹¹³⁵ See for instance Flanagan, M.-T., *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010); Bracken, D. and D. Ó Riain-Raedel, *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

§6 *sénairecht, auptha 7 felmasa 7 fídlanna*] As Stokes already remarked in his notes to our text, the list of sinful activities includes four works associated with ‘magical processes’.¹¹³⁶ The word *sénairecht* ‘divination’, derived from *sén*, primarily refers to reading signs, omens or portents, including the reading of astrological signs,¹¹³⁷ but it is also attested with the meaning ‘charm’. *Auptha* are charms or spells, as are *felmasa*, though the word can also mean ‘sorcery’.¹¹³⁸ *Fídlann*, with *fídl* ‘wood’ as its first element, seems to designate a form of divination using wood. Stokes adduces a passage from the late version of *Tochmarc Étaíne* preserved in London, BL Egerton 1782, f. 118a to illustrate what this could have been like: it describes a wizard who wishes to attain knowledge of the whereabouts of Étaín and makes ‘four rods of yew and writes ogham thereon; and by his keys of knowledge, and by his ogham, it is revealed to him that Étaín is in the Fairy Mound of Breg Leith’.¹¹³⁹

Of the other sins listed here, adultery, kinslaying, manslaughter and secret murder (*F*), perjury, and druidry (which perhaps may have included the above?) are considered irredeemable in the ‘Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations’.¹¹⁴⁰

§6 *Ar buí ... namá*] This line is omitted in *F*, most likely due to homoeoteleuton caused by the phrase *idlu namá* appearing with a form of *adraid* twice in consecutive sentences.

§6 *IS e-so indeadh 7 deifer 7 dighultus do-bera for tir n-Erinn F*] The scribe of *F* likely had a different exemplar at this point from which he erroneously copied *dighultus* instead of a more plausible *in dighultuis*, giving ‘the cause of the vengeance’. I deem it unlikely that the phrase as it stands was an innovation on the part of the scribe of *F*: it is an embellishment of *B*’s *Hit e tra dethbere*. Note that the scribe of *F* has placed the emphasis of the action on God (the ‘he’ implied in the active verb in this phrase), whilst in *B* it is the ‘causes’, i.e. the guilt of the people as described in this paragraph, which bring the plague.

§6 *amal ro fuair Padraic ar tosaidh leo F*] The scribe of *F* has here misunderstood *B*’s *ro-fácaib*, reading it as a form of *fo-gaib* ‘find’ rather than *fo-ácaib* ‘leave’.

¹¹³⁶ ‘Adamnan’s Second Vision’, p. 440.

¹¹³⁷ See Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, pp. ii 17.32, where *sén* ‘sign’ is used in this connection in the glosses to the *De Temporum Ratione* in the Carlsruhe Bede.

¹¹³⁸ *DIL* s.v. cites the word’s definition in Ó Cléirigh’s Glossary as *droichfhios* ‘evil knowledge’.

¹¹³⁹ Stokes, ‘Adamnan’s Second Vision’, p. 440, n. 12; cf. Windisch, ‘Fís Adamnáin: Die Vision’, p. 129.

¹¹⁴⁰ Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, p. 278.

§6 *belgeghuidhe 7 daíne F*] This phrase has likely suffered from some corruption. I am not certain of the meaning intended. The first word is possibly intended as a compound of *belgach* ‘babbling’ and *guide* ‘prayer’ or, alternatively, perhaps as an abstract noun *belgaige* derived of *belgach*.¹¹⁴¹ I have provided ‘garbled prayer’ as a tentative translation. I am equally uncertain about the intended reading of the second word. I have provided the translation for *doíre*, though I am not convinced that this fits the context neatly.

§7 *scamach 7 boár*] Both these words refer to cattle-plagues. The first is usually translated as ‘murrain’, and appears to be a disease affecting the lungs (*scam*), whilst the meaning of the second is literally ‘cow-mortality’. The distinction between these diseases is now no longer fully understood.¹¹⁴²

§8 *denum redi do amréidib*] This literally translates as ‘making smooth from rough’; less literally, it could mean something along the lines of ‘making easy what is difficult’ or even ‘calming unrest’. The original reference is now lost to us, but it is possible that this is an echo of a Latin quotation. A comparable phrase is found in Columbanus’ Letter VI, which contains a list of good qualities to which one ought to aspire, among which he lists *levigans deasperata* which G. S. M. Walker translates as ‘smoothing the rough places’.¹¹⁴³ In his *Confessions* Augustine describes how God helped him *tortuosa mea direxeris et aspera lenieris* ‘straighten my crookedness and smooth my rough ways’.¹¹⁴⁴ These quotations ultimately appear to derive from Isa. 40:4, cited in Luke 3:5 as *et erunt prava in directa, et aspera in vias planas* ‘and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain’.¹¹⁴⁵

Stokes took the phrase to refer to reconciling differences, but was not specific in his interpretation.¹¹⁴⁶ It could certainly refer to smoothing out quarrels or feuds, but in this context, I tentatively suggest it might also refer to penance or atonement

¹¹⁴¹ I owe this last suggestion to John Carey.

¹¹⁴² Cf. F. Kelly’s discussion of cattle-diseases in Kelly, F., *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin: DIAS, 1997), pp. 196-8.

¹¹⁴³ Walker, G.S., *Sancti Columbani Opera*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 2 (Dublin: DIAS, 1970), p. 59.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Confessions* IX.4. Translation by J.G. Pilkington, in Schaff, P. (ed.), *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of his Life and Work*, Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 1 (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1886; repr. Peabody, 1994), p. 131.

¹¹⁴⁵ For a possible reflection of the same theme in the text known as *The Three Utterances*, see Wright, *op. cit.* in *The End and Beyond*.

¹¹⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, n. 14, p. 441.

(cf. *deuota penitentia* §1), in the sense of spiritual reconciliation with God. This requirement could be regarded as part of or drawing on the expression in the sentence preceding this one (in §7) that the people ought to ‘renew their faith’.

§8 *It e tra .iii. heterii. Petur apstal 7 Muri Og 7 Michel archaangel*] The Virgin Mary, the archangel Michael and the apostle Peter are presented here as guarantors to ensure that the Irish will be saved. The commands given by God are thus presented, in effect, as a contract, guaranteed by Mary, Peter and Michael. The description is probably inspired by an intercession motif involving these three figures as intercessors. The motif is—in all likelihood—ultimately derived from a Greek source of the *Transitus Mariae*.¹¹⁴⁷ In a version of this text, a copy in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 3550 (thirteenth century) which seems to be ‘an independent translation of a Greek source similar to that which lies behind *Transitus W*’ (one of the Latin recensions), Michael, Mary and the apostles appeal, successfully, to Christ to obtain respite for the tormented souls.¹¹⁴⁸ In the Irish *Transitus Mariae*, however, Mary is duly accompanied by Michael and the apostles, but only she is involved in the intercession.¹¹⁴⁹ In the *Apocalypse of the Virgin*, a text believed to represent a tradition later than the *Transitus Mariae*, the motif of Mary, Michael and the apostles interceding on behalf of the damned has become firmly established.¹¹⁵⁰

This motif has also been attested in the New Minster *Liber uitae* (1031 A.D.), in which Mary, Michael and Peter are made intercessors for the queen, king and the extended Winchester community, and the trio appears together in Anglo-Saxon prayers, homilies and charters.¹¹⁵¹ I have not, however, been able to locate parallels in other Irish sources.

§9 *dona n-anmanna biu, itir doine 7 cetra*] Stokes notes here a reference to a poem in the *Cogadh Gaedel re Gallaibh* which seems to confirm the practice of making

¹¹⁴⁷ Clayton, M., 'The Transitus Mariae: The Tradition and its Origins', *Apocrypha* 10 (1999) 74-98.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 93. Clayton concludes that Mary's role as intercessor 'almost certainly goes back to the beginning' of this textual tradition (p. 93).

¹¹⁴⁹ Breatnach, 'An Irish Homily'.

¹¹⁵⁰ Rutherford, A., (trans.), 'The Apocalypse of the Virgin, or the Apocalypse of the Holy Mother of God concerning the Chastisements', in Menzies, A. (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 9 (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 167-74, esp. §§ 25-9.

¹¹⁵¹ Karkov, C., 'Judgment and Salvation in the New Minster Liber Vitae', in Powell, K. and D. G. Scragg (eds.), *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 2 (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 151-64, esp. pp. 152, 156-8.

calves fast.¹¹⁵² See also §13 in this connection. Stokes points out that the usage appears to confirm ‘belief in the souls of animals, and of the tendency to treat them as human’. Though I cannot agree with the latter half of this statement, the notion that cattle too have souls would seem to be reflected in the *anmanna* of the text—unless the word in this case represents *anmandae* ‘living creature, animal’. Since the *anmanna* of our text are qualified as *doíne* and *cetra*, I deem it more likely that we are dealing with the latter. The translation consequently reads ‘creatures’.

§9 *do neoch dib is forglide cidtus dia ticfa a denum*] Stokes admits that he is making a mere guess as to the meaning here in translating ‘it is nobleness indeed if it shall come to keep it’. I have taken *cidtus* to be a variant spelling, common enough in *B*, of *cétamus* ‘indeed’, and *dia ticfa* to be an example of the construction *tic dím* ‘I am able, I can’. Kuno Meyer discussed this idiom in connection with the statement *is iat-sin lānemain dia ticfa mo lesugud-sa* in the tale *Goire Conaill Chernaig*, which he translated ‘they are the couple that are able to provide for me’.¹¹⁵³ Hence in our text the subject of *dia ticfa*, 3sg. fut. of *do-icc*, is expressed in the relative pronoun, referring back to *neoch*, which is used as an indeclinable relative pronoun. Whether the scribe still understood the meaning of the relative pronoun is uncertain. If one were to argue that he did not, we must read *dia* as *do* and it would be better to translate ‘for any of them [who] is proven to be able to accomplish it’.

The sentence here foreshadows the exemptions mentioned in §10, in particular the phrase *senori na fuilnget aine*, ‘old people who cannot endure a fast’. The implication, therefore, is that the fast will not be expected of those who are not able to successfully keep it.

§10 *in cétna aíne iar n-init chorgais ghemrid*] The text here describes the fasts prescribed to ward off the prophecy. They take place at four times in the year, the first one beginning after the beginning of the winter Lent; the second one the Wednesday after the beginning of the spring Lent; the third the Wednesday after Pentecost; and the fourth fast, the Wednesday after the beginning of autumn. This scheme largely corresponds to the fasts known now as the Ember days. These are

¹¹⁵² *Op. cit.* n. 16, p. 441. (His reference is to Todd, J.H. (ed. and trans.), *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), p. 100.)

¹¹⁵³ Meyer, K., ‘Goire Conaill Chernaig i Cruachain ocus Aided Ailella ocus Conaill Chernaig’, *ZCP* 1 (1897) 102-11, p. 109, n. 7.

customarily held on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after the feast of St Lucy (13 December), Ash Wednesday, Whitsunday and Holy Cross day (14 September). The Ember days are of obscure origin, but they were certainly celebrated in Rome by Pope Leo (440-61),¹¹⁵⁴ who considered their observance to be an apostolic tradition, and were officially prescribed by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085).¹¹⁵⁵ Note, however, that in our text the first fast, that normally due on 13 December, begins not on a Wednesday but on a Friday, and that the first three fasts are dated with reference to the three Lents traditionally observed in Ireland. The winter Lent, or *gamchorgus*, is the Lenten period terminating at Christmas and would normally have started, not on 13 December, but on 13 November (assuming a six-week Lent),¹¹⁵⁶ which places the start of the three-day fast on the nineteenth of November in this year, or on the fourteenth if we assume they started at the end on 1095 to complete a full year of fasting before the feast of the Decollation of John the Baptist on 29 August. It would seem, moreover, from the statements in this text, that the festivals of Easter and Pentecost were celebrated with a three-day feast rather than an octave, as was customary after the ninth century, unless we assume that the fast started the Wednesday after the festival.¹¹⁵⁷ The nature of the fast here prescribed is actually quite severe: §9 states that it entails three days and three night without food or drink, which is stricter than the allowance of one meal per day which was standard in the Western Church.¹¹⁵⁸

§10 *frisa-hicthar*] This 3sg. pres. pass. form of *fris-acci* seems to have been misinterpreted as a form of *íccaid* with a prepositional relative, and rewritten with an inorganic *h*.

¹¹⁵⁴ 'Ember days' in Cross, F.L. and E.A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd edn (New York: Oxford UP, 1984), p. 445.

¹¹⁵⁵ Mersman, F., 'Ember Days' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907-12), pp. v.399.

¹¹⁵⁶ The six-week Lent is the model followed in the earlier medieval period in the Western Church, but it was gradually replaced from the seventh century onwards, under pressure of complaints from (among others) Gregory the Great, by a true forty-day fast (6 weeks only amounting to 36 days, as Sundays were not regarded as fast days). There is a particular problem with applying this to the winter Lent, however, as a forty-day Lent would clash with the feast of St Michael on 11 November. Consequently, I follow P. Ó Néill here in assuming that this would have been a six-week Lent; see his 'Irish Observance of the Three Lents and the Date of the St Gall Priscian (MS 904)', *Ériu* 51 (2000) 159-80, esp. pp. 171-2.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-5.

¹¹⁵⁸ 'Ember days', in *The Oxford Dictionary*, p. 446.

§10 *at-renat boin co n-uingi as cech urthobach bus tresi 7 bus nesa doib bes in cech thuaith*] The payment of a ‘cow with an ounce of silver’ is possibly intended as *boin co uingi*, lit. ‘a cow up to an ounce of silver’, referring to a milch cow, which is the equivalent of an ounce of silver.¹¹⁵⁹ Alternatively, Dr. Kevin Murray suggests *uingi* should rather be read as ‘fine’. I have translated *cech urthobach bus tresi 7 bus nesa* as ‘each levy which is strongest and nearest to them’, but am uncertain as to the meaning of this.

§11 *Biait*, etc.] The *Biait* is the famous *Beati immaculati* (Ps 118/9), the saving efficacy of which is asserted in several medieval Irish legends.¹¹⁶⁰ The *Magnificat* is the canticle uttered by Mary in Luke 1:46-55, while the *Benedictus* is another Canticle (Luke 1:68-79). *Miserere mei Dominus* is Ps 50; ‘Patrick’s hymn’ is the hymn beginning ‘Audite omnes amantes’, traditionally ascribed to Patrick’s follower Secundinus or Sechnall; the ‘hymn of the apostles’ is Cuimmíne Fota’s *Celebra Iuda*; the *Hymnum dicat* is the well-known hymn by St. Hilary of Poitiers; ‘Michael’s hymn’ is the antiphon *In trinitate spes mea* attributed to St Colmán mac Murchon. As noted above, this list is very similar to an office from the late eighth-century gospel codex known as the Book of St. Mulling.¹¹⁶¹

§12 *muireoin, .i. manda*] The notion that the *manna* which rained from heaven in the desert (Exod. 16:13; Num. 11:6-9) could be construed as ‘sea-birds’ seems to reflect a confused reminiscence of Num. 11:31, where quails are blown in from the sea.

§12 The Israelites cross the Red Sea ‘with dry feet’ in Exod. 14:16, 21; 15:19. That Moses was on Mount Sinai for forty days and nights without food or drink is described in Exod. 34:28 (and earlier in 24:18 but without the reference to food and drink). The Lord speaks to Moses face to face (*facie ad faciem*) in Exod. 33:11 and he is given the law of scripture in Exod. 31:18 and 34:28-9. The victory of Moses (and Joshua) over the Amalekites is found in Exod. 17:8-14. The statement that the sun was turned from one day to the next (*on trath co araile*) is possibly inspired by

¹¹⁵⁹ Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, p. 587. The basic unit, *bó mlicht* (milch cow) is equivalent to 1 *ungae* or 24 scruples or 2 *sét* or 1/3 *cumal*.

¹¹⁶⁰ Cf. for instance *The Two Clerical Students*, ed. John Carey in *The End and Beyond*.

¹¹⁶¹ Dublin, TCD 60 (shelfmark A.I.15). Cf. Atkinson and Bernard, *Liber Hymnorum*, pp. i.xxiv; Jeffery, P., ‘Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours’, in Fassler, M. E. and R. A. Baltzer (eds.), *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 99-144.

the statement that Moses was able to hold up his arms until sunset, this being the start of the next day at the time. The reference to the two halves of the river Jordan comes from Josh. 3:15 where it is Joshua rather than Moses who mediates between God and the Israelites.

§13 Joshua destroys Jericho with God's help in Josh. 6:20-1. The phrase 'by the edge of spear and sword' echoes the Biblical *in ore gladii* 'by the edge of the sword'. In the section on the destruction of the Assyrians the author has confused Hezekiah with Joshua: in 2 Kgs 19:35 and Isa. 37:36 an angel of the Lord comes to Hezekiah's aid and slays one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians. Cf. Chron. 32:20-22.

§13 *i crich Med*] The Medes are not, in fact, mentioned in the account of these events in Jonah 3.

§14 For the story of Daniel, the lions and the prophet Habakkuk see Dan. 14:29-38. For the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace see Dan. 3. For Nebuchadnezzar's derangement see Dan. 4:30. The people of Nineveh were saved from the plague in Jon. 3:3.

§15 Hezekiah gains fifteen years in 2 Kgs 20:1-11, where God has the sun go backwards a few degrees as a sign that he healed Hezekiah. Christ fights against the Devil's temptation in Luke 4:1-13.

§16 *do-rigne*] Stokes edited to a Middle Irish passive *do-rigned*¹¹⁶² in this instance, but there is no need to do so as the agent of the actions in this paragraph is quite clearly God. Moreover, the verb *ros-dingaib* in the adjoined clause is not so easily read as a passive.

¹¹⁶² For the use of active root *do-rign-* for the passive in Middle Irish see McCone, K., *The Early Irish Verb* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1997), pp. 232-4.

Appendix B: Visions and Apocalypses

In attempting a description of vision literature, one inevitably postulates boundaries of definition, in particular concerning areas of potential affinity with other genres. One such boundary that is notoriously difficult to navigate is that between visions and apocalypses. It may therefore be helpful to include a brief discussion of the apocalypses and an initial outline of the problem at this point.

As I hinted above (chapter 1.1), the visions to be considered in this study fall under the category ‘eschatology’, that is, belief concerning the last things and its relationship to history and to the present. The visions are a particular form of expression of such beliefs. Another, related form of expression is that of the ‘apocalypse’, a term most familiar perhaps from the *Apocalypse of John* (i.e. the *Book of Revelation*). Much of the difficulty surrounding texts referred to as apocalypses comes from terminological confusion surrounding the term ‘apocalyptic’ (used as a noun derived from German *Apokalyptik*).¹¹⁶³ In popular conception, the term is familiarly associated with end-of-time fanaticism and crisis or catastrophe. According to Martin McNamara, the term ‘apocalypticism’ reflects the “world of ideas in which this genre [apocalypse] originated and developed”.¹¹⁶⁴ More specifically, apocalypticism is often understood as a belief in the imminence of the end time, often presented in conjunction with a highly deterministic view of history and a strong belief in judgement, salvation and the hope of transcendence of death.¹¹⁶⁵ It can be distinguished from eschatology in general in this sense, that

¹¹⁶³ See e.g. John Collins’ remarks in Collins, *Apocalypse*, pp. 3-5 and in Collins, J.J., *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1997), pp. 26-7; as well as Adela Yarbro Collins’ introduction to Collins, A.Y. (ed.), *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, Semeia 36 (Decatur GA: Scholars Press, 1986) and Michael, M.G., ‘The Genre of Apocalypse: What Are They Saying Now?’, *Bulletin of Biblical Studies* 18:July-December (1999) 115-26.

¹¹⁶⁴ McNamara, M., ‘Apocalyptic and Eschatological Texts in Irish Literature: Oriental Connections?’, in McNamara, M. (ed.), *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage: The Middle East and Celtic Realms* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), pp. 75-97, p. 76.

¹¹⁶⁵ McGinn, B., *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 3-4, 7-9; Collins, J. ‘Apocalypse: An Overview’, in Jones, *et al.*, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp. 409-14. The German scholar Klaus Koch was one of the first to attempt a description of such movements as characterised by eight clusters of motifs: (1) urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future; (2) the end as a cosmic catastrophe; (3) periodization and determinism; (4) activity of angels and demons; (5) new salvation, paradisaic in character (6) manifestation of the kingdom of God; (7) a mediator with royal functions; (8) the catchword ‘glory’. Quoted in Collins, J.J., *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, Biblical Resource, 2nd rev. edn (Grand Rapids MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), p. 13. From Koch, K., *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970), Transl. Kohn, M., *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, 1972), pp. 28-33.

eschatology, whilst including an awareness of the reality of the Last Age and the coming of the Antichrist, does not necessarily involve the belief that the end is imminent.¹¹⁶⁶ Though the term ‘apocalypticism’ is derived from ‘apocalypse’, its usual connotations do not accurately reflect all texts referred to as apocalypses, and it has been suggested that eschatological expectation as a key aspect of apocalyptic literature is overemphasized.¹¹⁶⁷ Consequently, John Collins cautions that a clear distinction must be upheld between the two terms¹¹⁶⁸ and that the term ‘apocalypticism’ and the adjective ‘apocalyptic’ ought first and foremost to refer to the material in the apocalypses.¹¹⁶⁹ In 1976, in order to create clarity in the terminological confusion, Paul Hanson proposed a division into ‘apocalypse’, referring to the genre, ‘apocalyptic eschatology’, defined as “a religious perspective, a way of viewing divine plans in relation to mundane realities”, and ‘apocalypticism’, defined as “the symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality”, to facilitate the different levels at which the discussion operated.¹¹⁷⁰ Modern scholarship has now, as far as I am aware, largely adopted this terminology. Consequently, it is possible for a variety of texts to be considered ‘apocalyptic’, in that they share the ideology also expressed in apocalypses. However, when speaking of an ‘apocalypse’, particular reference is made to both the form and content of the text.¹¹⁷¹ In the remainder of this discussion I shall focus only on literature concerning the definition of the genre.

The precise nature of an ‘apocalypse’ and of the corpus of texts to be so designated has again been highly debated over the past three decades. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that this corpus could be said to contain such texts as *Revelation*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 2 and 3 *Baruch*, 1 and 2 *Enoch*, the *Testament of Levi*, *Daniel*, 4 *Ezra*, the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of*

¹¹⁶⁶ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, pp. 3-4

¹¹⁶⁷ Collins, A.Y., ‘Apocalypse Now: The State of Apocalyptic Studies Near the End of the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century’, *Harvard Theological Review* 104:04 (2011) 447-57, p. 448. She refers to work by Michael Stone, in which he demonstrates that “the revelation of things in heaven and other places not normally accessible to human beings was as important as eschatology” and to David Aune and Martha Himmelfarb’s contributions to Collins, *Early Christian Apocalypticism* (Semeia 36).

¹¹⁶⁸ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 13.

¹¹⁶⁹ Collins, *Seers*, p. 27.

¹¹⁷⁰ Collins, ‘Apocalypse Now’, pp. 447-8.

¹¹⁷¹ Cf. McGinn, *Visions of the End*, p. 4.

Mary, among others.¹¹⁷² Though the focus is predominantly on Jewish and Christian texts, the corpus also encompasses Greco-Roman, Persian and Gnostic texts. The word ‘apocalypse’, from Greek ἀποκάλυψις, simply means ‘revelation, the unveiling of a divine secret’¹¹⁷³—hence the title *Revelation* for the Apocalypse of John, which in fact represents the earliest attestation of the title.¹¹⁷⁴ Thus, the “essential element”, according to McNamara, is “revelation from God through an intermediary, generally about things that are to happen soon”.¹¹⁷⁵ The bid for a definition of an ‘apocalypse’ began in earnest in the 1970s, when Klaus Koch proposed six typical features for this genre:

discourse cycles, spiritual turmoils, paraenetic discourses, pseudonymity, mythical imagery and composite character.¹¹⁷⁶

Other features considered to be characteristic of apocalypse include: revelation to the seer by an intermediary, usually an angel, who interprets or serves as guide; the manner of revelation, usually through a dream, vision or journey or occasionally a book; the manner of presentation of the seer to mankind; its highly literary and often symbolic character; reference to the disposition of the visionary, who is often a venerable figure from the past; a review of history presented as prophecy; the revelation of a supernatural world and supernatural beings; and destruction of the wicked.¹¹⁷⁷ The recent developments in this area owe much to the development of genre as a heuristic device: in the mid-1970s the Society for Biblical Literature initiated the Forms and Genres project, as part of which a research group on apocalypses was commissioned to attempt to reach some consensus and to “bring some order into a rather chaotic area of study”.¹¹⁷⁸ The result, published in 1979, is a study that interrogates the phenomenological similarity of apocalypses dated up to the Late Antique period, and proposes a Master Paradigm for the genre focused on form and content. This paradigm is subdivided under the headings *manner of*

¹¹⁷² See e.g. the texts discussed in Collins, *Apocalypse*; *idem.*, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, and Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*.

¹¹⁷³ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, p. 3; Collins, *Apocalypse*, p. 3.

¹¹⁷⁴ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 3.

¹¹⁷⁵ McNamara, ‘Apocalyptic’, p. 76.

¹¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 5.

¹¹⁷⁷ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, pp. 5-7; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, pp. 5-7.

¹¹⁷⁸ Collins, *Apocalypse*, preface.

revelation, content of revelation: temporal axis and spatial axis, paraenesis and concluding elements and identifies the following features as characteristic:¹¹⁷⁹

Table 2 SBL Master Paradigm

Manner of Revelation

1. Medium by which the revelation is communicated:
 - 1.1 Visual revelation in the form of
 - 1.1.1 Visions or
 - 1.1.2 Epiphanies
 - 1.2 Auditory revelation in the form of
 - 1.2.1 Discourse or
 - 1.2.2 Dialogue
 - 1.3 Otherworld journey
 - 1.4 Writing
2. Otherworldly mediator
3. Human recipient:
 - 3.1 Pseudonymity
 - 3.2 his Disposition and
 - 3.3 his Reaction

Content of Revelation: Temporal Axis

4. Protology (matters dealing with the beginning of history or pre-history), e.g.
 - 4.1 Theogony and/or Cosmogony
 - 4.2 Primordial events
5. History, in the form of
 - 5.1 explicit recollection or
 - 5.2 'ex eventu prophecy'
6. Present salvation through knowledge

7. Eschatological crisis in the form of
 - 7.1 Persecution and/or
 - 7.2 Other eschatological upheavals
8. Eschatological judgement and/or destruction brought upon
 - 8.1 sinners
 - 8.2 the world or
 - 8.3 otherworld beings
9. Eschatological salvation through
 - 9.1 cosmic transformation
 - 9.2 personal salvation in the form of
 - 9.2.1 resurrection or
 - 9.2.2 other forms of afterlife

Content of Revelation: Spatial Axis

10. Otherworldly elements:
 - 10.1 Otherworldly regions and
 - 10.2 Otherworldly beings

Paraenesis

11. Paraenesis by the mediator to the recipient

Concluding Elements

12. Instructions the recipient
13. Narrative conclusion

Along with this paradigm, the SBL Apocalypse group proposed the following definition of the genre:

a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.¹¹⁸⁰

They further identified two main types within the genre 'apocalypse'; one which is concerned primarily with history according to a pattern of crisis, judgement and salvation (type I), and one which is less concerned with history than with revelation through the form of an otherworld journey (type II). A further sub-division was made into six types based on their eschatology, namely

¹¹⁷⁹ Adapted from *ibid.*, pp. 6-8. See further below.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

- Ia: 'Historical' apocalypses with no Otherworld journey
- Ib: Apocalypses with cosmic and/or political eschatology (*which have neither historical review nor otherworld journey*)
- Ic: Apocalypses with only personal eschatology (*and no otherworld journey*)
- Ila: 'Historical' apocalypses with an Otherworld journey
- Ilb: Otherworldly journeys with cosmic and/or political eschatology
- Ilc: Otherworldly journeys with only personal eschatology¹¹⁸¹

Not all of these categories are equally well represented, however. The first category includes primarily Jewish texts—e.g. Daniel 7-12, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch—and is the basis for many generalisations concerning the term 'apocalyptic', though it represents only about one-third of the Jewish apocalypses. The second group contains such texts as *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, but no Jewish or Graeco-Roman texts. Type Ic contains only Christian and Gnostic works, including the *Testament of Isaac 2-3a* and the *Apocryphon of John*. Type Ila is very rare altogether as the historic element is never dominant in type II texts. Type Ilb is very widely attested in both Jewish and Christian apocalypses, and includes e.g. the Enochian texts and the *Testament of Levi* as well as the *Ascension of Isaiah* 6-11, the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary*. The last type is equally widely attested and includes e.g. 3 Baruch, the *Apocalypse of the Holy Mother* and the *Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* as well as the majority of Graeco-Roman apocalypses.¹¹⁸² Though the validity of the sub-division into six different types of apocalypses on this basis has been challenged¹¹⁸³ and is now no longer insisted upon by the principal investigator,¹¹⁸⁴ it may yet prove helpful in studies of the development of eschatological thought. The division between the 'historic' and 'journey' types is almost universally accepted.¹¹⁸⁵ Based on their analysis of the

¹¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-5.

¹¹⁸² Collins, *Apocalypse*, pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁸³ See e.g. Himmelfarb, M., 'The Experience of the Visionary and Genre in the *Ascension of Isaiah* 6-11 and the *Apocalypse of Paul*', in Collins, A. Y. (ed.), *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, Semeia 36 (Decatur GA: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 97-111, p. 106.

¹¹⁸⁴ John Collins, the original editor of the Form and Genre study, reviews the prior study and its aftermath in his 1997 *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* and notes that he now no longer insists on this six-fold typology (*op. cit.*, pp. 27-8).

¹¹⁸⁵ However, Michael Vines, after reviewing the genre from the point of view of Bakhtin's chronotope theorem, recently argued that "The difference between the two types appears to be only formal, and therefore not such that it would indicate an essential difference within the genre." Vines, M.E., 'The Apocalyptic Chronotope', in Boer, R., de (ed.), *Bakhtin and genre theory in biblical studies*, Semeia 63 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), pp. 109-17, p. 116.

apocalypses according to this model the Apocalypse group was able to draw some preliminary conclusions, some of which I reproduce here:

- The Christian apocalypses are found in every type except IIa, while the Jewish apocalypses are found in every type except Ib and Ic.
- No pre-Christian apocalypse combines a review of history with an otherworldly journey and all the pre-Christian apocalypses which do not have an otherworldly journey have an *ex eventu* prophecy of history. All pre-Christian Jewish heavenly journeys have some interest in cosmic eschatology. In the Christian era it is no longer possible to identify a particular kind of eschatology with one manner of revelation.
- Personal eschatology is an important feature of all types of apocalypses at all stages of the genre. However, the emphasis placed on individual afterlife is modified by the degree to which it is put in the context of cosmic destruction and/or transformation.¹¹⁸⁶

This publication was extremely instrumental in shaping the debate on the genre and its relationship to ‘apocalypticism’. Where it falls short—especially from the point of view of a non-specialist—is in the choice not to engage in analysis or interpretation of the individual texts, this being left open to future contributions. As a result, however, the connection between the paradigm proposed and the texts discussed is somewhat obscured in my opinion. Following its publication, the study was criticised primarily on the grounds that it lacked a statement regarding function or illocution, leading ultimately to the publication of a number of papers addressing this methodological issue.¹¹⁸⁷ In *Semeia* 36, produced following a series of colloquia and seminars on the subject, it was acknowledged that a function statement was required and it was proposed that the following phrases be added to the original definition statement:

intended to interpret the present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the

¹¹⁸⁶ *loc. cit.*, pp. 15-7.

¹¹⁸⁷ David Helholm, ('The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John') and David Aune's ('The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre') contributions in particular addressed issues surrounding the proposed definition. In addition, Helholm argued the paradigmatic approach taken in *Semeia* 14 ought to be supplemented with a syntagmatic approach, for which he employed text-linguistic theory based on work published by the linguists Raible and de Saussure, in order to analyse hierarchically arranged communication levels within the text. In the introduction to the volume Adela Yarbro Collins evaluates the reception of *Semeia* 14 and its impact. See also notably Hartman, L., 'Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre', in Helholm, D. (ed.), *Text-Centered New Testament Studies: Text-Theoretical Essays on Early Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 102 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), pp. 89-105 for arguments regarding illocution.

understanding and the behaviour of the audience by means of divine authority.¹¹⁸⁸

One of the contributors, David Helholm, furthermore suggested a revised paradigm which takes into account the function of the genre and which is compiled, as he himself writes, on the basis of features proposed in previous studies in connection with attempts to define the apocalypse. I reproduce below his list by way of illustrating the features he considers characteristic in the genre.¹¹⁸⁹

Table 3 Helholm paradigm

<u>A. Content—Propositions and Themes</u>	s16 Account of vision(s)
s1 Eschatology as history in future form	s17 Account of audition(s)
s2 Cosmic history divided into periods (“Weltalterlehre”)	s18 Interpretation of vision(s)
s3 Description of the other-world	s19 Interpretation of audition(s)
s4 Combat between dualistic macro-cosmic powers	s20 Discourse of mediators
s5 Combat between dualistic macro-cosmic powers and/or groups	s21 Dialogues between mediator(s) and receiver
s6 Other-worldly mediators or revealers	s22 Heavenly writings (letters and/or books from Heaven)
s7 This-worldly recipients	s23 Quotations of the Supreme Divinity
s8 Addressees of recipient’s revelation	s24 Communication embedment
s9 Paraenesis	s25 Pictorial language
s10 Command to recipient to read and/or to write by other-worldly mediator	s26 Pseudonymity
s11 Systematization of numbers, etc.	s27 Combination of smaller forms
<u>B. Form—Style</u>	<u>C. Function—Communication</u>
s12 Narrative framework	s28 Intended for a group in crisis
s13 Epistolary prescript and/or post-script	s29 Exhortation to steadfastness and/or repentance
s14 Removal to a this-worldly place of revelation	s30 Promise of vindication and redemption or more generally stated: consolation
s15 Heavenly journey to an other-worldly place of revelation	s31 Authorization of message

It will be clear that Helholm’s section A largely coincides with the Apocalypse Group’s *temporal* and *spatial axis* and *paraenesis*, though Helholm appears to significantly downplay the eschatological element and does little to address Martha Himmelfarb’s criticism that the original paradigm does not sufficiently address the ‘otherworldly elements’ and the visionary’s experience of

¹¹⁸⁸ Collins, *Early Christian Apocalypticism* (Semeia 36), p. 7.

¹¹⁸⁹ Helholm, D., ‘The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John’, in Collins, A. Y. (ed.), *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, Semeia 36 (Decatur GA: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 13-64, pp. 22-3. I have omitted the text-linguistic jargon by which Helholm indicates the three sections. The s before the numbers indicates the *semes-noemes* or simply the characteristic features which make up the genre.

transcendence.¹¹⁹⁰ Category B conforms to the Apocalypse Group's *manner of revelation*, while C conforms largely to their *concluding elements* with the added statements of pragmatic function.

Since these studies, it would appear that the general contents of the genre so established have been more or less accepted. The discussion on function and rhetorical strategy has continued to develop alongside developments in the field of genre theory¹¹⁹¹ and recently the fruitful application of Bakhtin's theories on genre and dialogism to the problem has been explored in another publication in the *Semeia* series.¹¹⁹²

Vision vs. apocalypse

The relationship between the genres of vision and apocalypse is recognisably close, but has not as yet been clearly defined. In particular, the significant overlap between the 'journey' branch of the apocalypses and the visions will be obvious. The title *αποκάλυψις* (*apokalypsis*) is usually rendered in Latin as *uisio*, with the result that we speak both of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*. Some of the features traditionally present in the apocalypses are equally present in the visions, which can be said to have derived from the apocalypses to a degree. Bernard McGinn considers that these shared features include "intermediary revealing figures, an interest in heavenly realities, and stress upon coming judgement", but is of the opinion that "it is obvious that they form a genre of their own".¹¹⁹³ He differentiates between the two on the basis that visionary literature increasingly centres on the fate of the individual soul whereas apocalypses are linked by more general historical concerns,

especially a view of the present as a moment of supreme crisis ...
[and] frequently ... incorporate concern with the structure of history,
usually in terms of a theory of world ages.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁹⁰ Himmelfarb, 'The Experience', esp. pp. 98, 109.

¹¹⁹¹ See the review articles by Newsom, 'Spying Out the Land: A Report from Genology' (reprinted from Troxel, R.L. *et al.*, *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox* (Winona Lake IND: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 437-50), DiTommaso, L., 'Apocalypses and Apocalypticism I & II', *Currents in Biblical Research* 5:2-3 (2007) 235-86, 367-432 and Collins, 'Apocalypse Now'.

¹¹⁹² I will return to these developments only where relevant below.

¹¹⁹³ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, p. 15.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Gardiner equally writes that in comparison to apocalypses the “later visions ... [are] less concerned with the end-time than with the co-existent otherworld”¹¹⁹⁵ and that

[visions’] importance as events in the history of a community should not be confused with the essentially historical nature of apocalyptic literature. Here the judgement, the essential element of apocalyptic literature, indicates the culmination of history and the focal point of all human endeavour. Visions of heaven and hell are not necessarily books that define the ages of history.¹¹⁹⁶

Whilst it is certainly true, as we shall see, that historical concerns are of lesser concern in the medieval visions, the view here expressed, that historic concerns are a diagnostic marker of apocalypses, only holds true for the ‘historic’ apocalypses and is of limited use in identifying a distinction—if one is indeed to be made—between the ‘journey’ apocalypses and the medieval visions. In the light of the SBL study, which demonstrates that an interest in personal eschatology is a significant feature in all of the apocalypses, and which recognises that apocalypses of the historic type actually represent a minority, a differentiation solely on this basis becomes almost untenable. Gardiner is surely correct, however, in asserting the more universal character of apocalypses, reflected in a focus on the end-time (or final) judgement.

Carozzi too feels that apocalypses are less interested in the soul after death and points instead to such themes as the fate of Israel, the coming of the Messiah and the Day of Judgement. He further notes that the Christianisation of this genre began with *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, but argues that it is only in *VSP* that we see re-shaping or re-ordering of the genre under the influence of antique catabases:

A cette époque [2nd half of 2nd c.] la littérature apocalyptique juive et judéo-chrétienne était déjà abondamment développée et s’est prolongée quelque temps. En règle générale, ces écrits ne considèrent pas l’Au-delà que dans une perspective eschatologique, et ne s’intéressent que très peu au sort des âmes après la mort. Ils forment un genre littéraire à part centré sur des révélations relatives au sort futur d’Israël, à la venue de Messie et au jour du Jugement. L’*Apocalypse* dit de Jean et celle de Pierre marquent la christianisation de ce type de littérature. L’*Apocalypse de Paul* en est issue, mais lui fait subir une sorte de remise en ordre, inspirée des catabases antiques, sous forme d’un panorama complet de l’Au-delà actuel.¹¹⁹⁷

¹¹⁹⁵ Gardiner, *Medieval Visions*, p. xviii.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

¹¹⁹⁷ Carozzi, *Le voyage*, p. 4.

Carozzi is right in pointing to such themes as the fate of the nation of Israel and the Messiah as typical of (especially Jewish) apocalypses. Other themes listed above, such as recollection of the past, or ‘*ex eventu*’ prophecy also fall into the category of features that have not surfaced in my survey of medieval vision literature, and which, indeed, are already noticeably less common in type II visions.

An initial observation must surely be that there is no one feature that sets the visions apart from the apocalypses, but that the medieval vision would appear to place increasing emphasis on immediate and personal eschatology at the cost of elements reflecting a cosmic or end-time eschatology. That is not to say, however, that medieval visions are not concerned with the end-time—far from it. As mentioned above,¹¹⁹⁸ it has previously been suggested by scholars that the apocalypses should be regarded as influential antecedents to the visions. The role of *Revelation* and *VSP* as popular Christian apocalypses cannot be underestimated in this respect. As a result, many features of the apocalypses, and particularly those from *VSP*, are demonstrably also present in the visions. However, it is still far from clear to what extent the *uisiones* and the apocalypses are separate genres—or indeed, whether they are not two branches of the same genre. A detailed comparative analysis has not to date been carried out and I am currently preparing a study in this direction, based on the results of the present study and building on the results of the work carried out on the apocalypses by the Apocalypse group, Helholm and others. My motivation for undertaking a comparison of the results from my analysis of the visions in the previous chapters with the paradigm established for the apocalypses lies in the hypothesis that such a comparison will allow us to approximate with greater accuracy where the perceived distinction between apocalypses and vision is to be made and whether this distinction is purely one of thematic emphasis or whether it results in formal differences as well.

Apocalypse Paradigm: Type I and II

A start in this direction might be made by looking at the type I and II apocalypses separately. While the editors of the SBL Apocalypse study published their findings in groups subdivided as Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, Persian, and Graeco-Roman apocalypses, and apocalyptic Rabbinic literature, they did not publish a table of

¹¹⁹⁸ Section 1.1.1.1, pp. 12-5.

results based on the two types separately. John Collins remedied this somewhat when he published a section of the original paradigm, concerning temporal and eschatological aspects, in such form in his *Apocalyptic Imagination*.¹¹⁹⁹ In the following table, I have recast the results of the SBL Apocalypse group's analysis of Christian, Jewish and Graeco-Roman¹²⁰⁰ apocalypses into a comparative paradigm of type I and II as a preliminary indication of the inherent differences and similarities between the two and between type II and the *uisiones*. In the following table, those features occurring in *all* texts in that category are marked with & and those which are rare (<25%) are placed between brackets.¹²⁰¹

Table 29 General comparison of type I and type II apocalypses

Manner of Revelation	Type I		Type II	
	Jewish	Christian	Jewish	Christian
<i>Visual, i.e. in the form of:</i>				
1.1.1 Visions	•	•	&	• ^x
1.1.2 Epiphanies	[•] ^a	•		•
<i>Auditory, in the form of:</i>				
1.2.1 Discourse	•	•	[•] ^d	[•*] ^q
1.2.2 Dialogue	•	•*	•	•
1.3 Otherworldly journey		[•*] ^j	&	&
1.4 Writing	•	•	[•] ^e	[•] ^r
2. Otherworldly mediator	&	&	&	&
<i>The human recipient:</i>				
3.1 Pseudonymity	&	•	&	•*
3.2 Disposition of recipient	•	[•] ^k	•	•
3.3 Reaction of the recipient	•	•	•	•
Content of Revelation:				
Temporal Axis				
<i>Protology (history or pre-history):</i>				

¹¹⁹⁹ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 7.

¹²⁰⁰ From Collins, *Apocalypse*, pp. 28, 104. Jewish apocalypses: *Daniel 7-12, the Animal Apocalypse, the Apocalypse of Weeks in 1 Enoch, Jubilees 23, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch* (Ia); *the Apocalypse of Abraham* (IIa); *1 Enoch 1-36, the Book of the Heavenly Luminaries, the Similitudes of Enoch, the Testament of Levi 2-5* (IIb); *3 Baruch, the Testament of Abraham 10-15, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (IIc). Christian apocalypses: *Jacob's Ladder* (Ia); *Revelation, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Book of Elchasai, the Apocalypse of John the Theologian, the Testament of the Lord 1:1-14* (Ib); *5 Ezra 2:42-8, the Testament of Isaac 2-3a, the Questions of Bartholomew, the Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle 8b-14a* (Ic); *the Ascension of Isaiah 6-11, the Apocalypse of Paul, the Apocalypse of Esdras, the Apocalypse of Mary* (IIb); *the Testament of Isaac 5-6, the Testament of Jacob 5, Zosimus, the Apocalypse of the Holy Mother of God concerning the Punishments, the Apocalypse of James, the Mysteries of St. John the Apostle and the Holy Virgin, the Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle 17b-19b and the Apocalypse of Sedrach* (IIc).

¹²⁰¹ An asterisk indicates that in one or some of the texts included in the survey the feature is either implicit, possibly—but not certainly—present, or minor.

4.1 Theogony and/or Cosmogony (the origin of the world)	•		[•] ^f	
4.2 Primordial events	•	[•] ^l	•	•
<i>History, in the form of:</i>				
5.1 Explicit recollection	•	[•*] ^m	[•] ^g	•
5.2 'Ex Eventu' prophecy	&	[•*] ⁿ	[•] ^g	[•] ^s
6. Present salvation through knowledge		[•] ^o		
<i>Eschatological crisis, in the form of:</i>				
7.1 Persecution, and/or	•	•	[•] ^h	
7.2 Other eschatological upheavals	&	•*	•	[•] ^t
<i>Eschatological judgement and/or destruction upon:</i>				
8.1 The wicked	&	•	&	•
8.2 The world	[•] ^b	•	•*	•
8.3 Otherworldly beings	•	•	•*	[•] ^u
<i>Eschatological salvation through:</i>				
9.1 Cosmic transformation	&*	[•] ^j	•	[•] ^v
9.2.1 Resurrection	•*	•	[•] ⁱ	•
9.2.2 Other forms of afterlife	•*	&	&*	&*
<i>Content of Revelation: Spatial Axis</i>				
<i>Otherworldly elements:</i>				
10.1 Otherworldly regions	•	[•] ^p	&	•
10.2 Otherworldly beings	&	•	&	&
<i>Paraenesis</i>				
11. Paraenesis	[•] ^c	•		
<i>Concluding Elements</i>				
12. Instructions to the recipient.	•	•	•	[•] ^w
13. Narrative conclusion.	•	•	•	•

Notes:

- a. Only in *Daniel*.
- b. Only in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*.
- c. Only in 4 *Ezra*.
- d. Only in 2 *Enoch* and the *Heavenly Luminaries*.
- e. Only in the *Heavenly Luminaries*.
- f. Only in 2 *Enoch*.
- g. Only in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.
- h. Only in the *Similitudes of Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.
- i. Only in the *Similitudes of Enoch*.
- j. Only in *Revelation* and the *Apocalypse of John the Theologian*.
- k. Only in the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Apocalypse of John the Theologian*.
- l. Only in the *Questions of Bartholomew*.
- m. Only in and the *Testament of Jacob 1-3a* and the *Questions of Bartholomew*.
- n. Only in *Jacob's Ladder*, the *Testament of Isaac 2-3a*, and the *Testament of Jacob 1-3a*.
- o. Only in the *Testament of the Lord*.

- p. Only *Revelation*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Questions of Bartholomew*.
- q. Only in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, *Zosimus*, and the *Apocalypse of James*.
- r. Only in *Zosimus*.
- s. Only in the *Ascension of Isaiah*.
- t. Only in the *Apocalypses of Esdras* and *Sedrach*.
- u. Only in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and *Zosimus*.
- v. Only in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.
- w. Only in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Apocalypse of Paul*.
- x. Only the *Apocalypse of Sedrach* lacks this feature.

Appendix C: Applicability of Theory to Medieval (Irish) Texts

The analysis of medieval texts as a genre is paired with certain philological difficulties. Ideally, a full generic analysis not only includes, as detailed above, a genre's formal characteristics, but also examines the expectations it creates in its readers. Due to the alterity of the texts, any such study of its function and meaning must be derived from the source alone. The source, to boot, does not normally survive in its original form, so that both the integrity of the text and the frame in which it is transmitted are compromised.¹²⁰² The application of genre theory, considered a modern tool, to medieval texts may raise objections for some. These objections are usually fuelled by the assumption that medieval writers had no sense of genre, as their usage of generic terminology—from a modern point of view—is considered casual and chaotic at best.¹²⁰³ On these grounds Fowler has argued that genre *awareness* was largely in abeyance, at least where it concerns theorising.

Nonetheless, the wide range of texts in different genres surviving from the medieval period and the transmission in medieval schools of classical grammar and rhetoric, should put beyond doubt that medieval writers actively engaged in genre-conscious writing and were concerned with learning the rules of writing. The teaching of the skills of rhetoric is a legacy from the Classical Roman rhetors, but it was by no means cast aside in Late Antiquity: it was part of the *artes liberales* taught in the schools—which would in time inform our own understanding of Arts and Sciences—and was transmitted and adapted in influential works by Cassiodorus, Boethius, Isidore of Seville, Alcuin and others.¹²⁰⁴ Augustine of Hippo, though not wishing to teach the rules of rhetoric himself, openly endorsed, even commended, the study of it in order to improve one's ability to preach clearly and effectively in his influential *De doctrina Christiana*.¹²⁰⁵ Augustine's lecture focuses precisely on

¹²⁰² The latter, however, also offers the benefit of opening up a study of the contextualisation of the text during its transmission.

¹²⁰³ Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 142

¹²⁰⁴ Grammatical treatises, such as those by Priscian and Donatus, were considered the principal foundation of learning and were widely copied and studied. E.g., Isidore, following in this tradition, devotes the first two books of his *Etymologiae* to grammar (*De grammatica*), rhetoric and dialectic (*De rhetorica et dialectica*). For a succinct overview of the transmission of this type of knowledge see Law, V., *The History of Linguistics in Europe from Plato to 1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) and Chapter 2 'Saint Augustine and the Age of Transmission, A.D. 400-1050' in Murphy, J.J., *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (California: University of California Press, 1981).

¹²⁰⁵ *De doctrina Christiana*, bk IV. This work was highly influential in rhetorical schools in the Middle Ages.

the intersection between form and meaning and the importance of the former for creating the latter. Having discussed the interpretation of the meaning of text in the first three books, his fourth book was written to instruct in conveying meaning. While his account, with its emphasis on style, would appear to be aimed primarily at oral delivery, inherent in the nature of homilies, its applicability to written sources—whether homilies or not—is self-evident: early medieval Christianity was largely a culture centred around the written word and Augustine himself illustrates his arguments with examples from Scripture and quotations from other authors. His work served as a source for many later works, as did his homilies. In addition, Martin Irvine argues that Isidore of Seville's treatment of *grammatica* in his *Etymologiae* shows just how thoroughly concerned it is with texts and writing—as opposed to spoken language and composition—and with understanding and learning.¹²⁰⁶ Isidore concludes his first book on *grammatica* with a synthesis of literary genres and literary history, distinguishing between prose and poetry and between fiction and history; and he expands on the types of literary works in VI.viii (*De generibus opusculorum*).¹²⁰⁷ His discussion in book I is largely functional, placed in the context of *grammatica* as the means to understanding both the linguistics and the meaning of language: for Isidore, the rules of writing were an integral element in reading and learning.¹²⁰⁸ Even if theoretical descriptions of genre were not a primary concern of medieval authors outside of encyclopedic works, it would, in my opinion, be an injustice to medieval authors to argue that they had no genre awareness. If we understand genre as an inherent function of writing, which I take as axiomatic, the position that a medieval author had no genre awareness becomes untenable.

In the medieval Irish literary tradition, where evidence for the kind of writing taught in grammar schools is largely lacking,¹²⁰⁹ we have nonetheless an abundance

¹²⁰⁶ For Irvine's discussion of Isidore's approach to *grammatica* see Irvine, M., *The Making of Textual Culture: Grammatica and Literary Theory, 350-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994; repr. 2007), pp. 209-43, and esp. 218-20 for the points raised here.

¹²⁰⁷ In the category of historical genres in bk I.xliv he includes *ephemeris, kalendaria, annales, historia, argumentum, fabula*. In VI.viii he identifies three types of literary works: *excerptum* (or *scholia*) 'extract, summary', *homilia* (or *verbum*) 'talks, discourse', and *tomus* 'book', and further distinguishes *dialogus, sermo, tractatus, commentarium, apologeticum, panegyricum, fasti, prooemium* or *praefatio, praeceptum, parabola, problema, propositio, quaestio, epistola, and missa*.

¹²⁰⁸ Irvine, *The Making*, p. 219, discussing *Sententiae* III.viii-xiv.

¹²⁰⁹ Notwithstanding the evidence for scholars teaching grammar in the Carolingian empire, we know hardly anything about the kind of grammar taught in Ireland or, for that matter, about the types of schools available at any given time. More research in this area is a *desideratum*. See the sources in n.

of evidence for textual categorisation, not least in the medieval Irish ‘tale lists’, which provide a large, though not exhaustive, catalogue of *scéla* (‘tales’) ordered under a series of headings. These lists classify tales according to the first word of their title. The surviving versions of the lists, referred to as A, B and C, of which C comprises two short lists, go back to a common ancestor possibly dating to the tenth century.¹²¹⁰ The introduction to list A distinguishes between *prímscéla* ‘major tales’ and *fo-scéla* ‘minor tales’ (the latter are not enumerated in the lists), and a number of tales added in the ‘appendix’ that are designated *amal phrímscéla ... ármither* ‘they are reckoned as major tales’.¹²¹¹ The main list includes *togla, tána, tochmarca, catha, uatha, immrama, oiite* (= *aideda*), *fessa, forbasa, echtraí, aithid, airgne*, and the appendix adds *tomadmann, físi, serca, sluagid, tochomlada*. The oldest copy of this list is preserved in the manuscript known as the *Book of Leinster*,¹²¹² which dates to the twelfth century. List B is included in the tale *Airec Menman Uraird meic Coise*, of which three manuscript copies survive, all from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The relevant section introduces the collection of tales as *gnáthscéla* ‘well-known tales’ and begins with a miscellaneous collection of titles mostly culled from the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* and from a list of *remscéla* ‘foretales’ to the same tale.¹²¹³ This list is followed by the categories *tana, echtraí, comperta, (prim)chatha, togla, fessa, buili, tochmarca, aithid, togla*; and the appendix containing *tomadmann, físi, serca, sluagid, tochomlada*.

On the one hand, these lists testify to the well-known Irish predilection for enumeration, both as a functional historical tool and as a literary device or genre, as exemplified by the *Triads of Ireland*, the lists of place names (*dindshenchas*), lists of names of saints, genealogies, categorisations of rank in laws, and of types of metre, but equally by compilations of Biblical or religious lore organised by number such as the *Liber de Numeris*, or by the copious numerical thematic motifs, such as the three cries in hell, the two sorrows in heaven, or the four places the soul visits after death,

187 above for more on this subject. Isidore’s own chapter are organised by *differentiae*, “the discursive strategy which accompanies the recognition of origins”.

¹²¹⁰ See Mac Cana, P., *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: DIAS, 1980); Toner, G., ‘Reconstructing the Earliest Irish Tale Lists’, *Éigse* 32 (2000) 88-120.

¹²¹¹ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, pp. 41, 48.

¹²¹² Dublin, TCD MS 1339 [H.2.18] (LL).

¹²¹³ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, p. 87-9. This is reminiscent of the—mostly Latin—practice of preceding a long text by a list of headings identifying individual sections of the work. A familiar example would be Bede’s *HE*, but we also find such lists preceding, for instance, *Fled Bricrenn* in *LU*.

to name but a few.¹²¹⁴ On the other hand, the lists undeniably testify to an awareness on the part of the Irish of the breadth of literary composition. The context in which the lists are presented is both socio-legal and meta-literary. The introduction to list A, as well as those to the two copies of list C, present the tale list in the context of the legal status and qualification of the *filid*, associating their rank with the number of tales they were expected to know.¹²¹⁵ The context of list B, as has been mentioned, is the tale *Airec Menman Uraird meic Coise*, in which the poet Uraird invents a stratagem through which he plans to extract from the king a compensation owing to him. He achieves this by casting his own situation into a story and relating this to the king. He allows the king to select the story himself from his catalogue of stories, which he enumerates before the king. At this point the list is introduced into the text. The text is thus a meta-literary description of one of the envisaged interpretations and functions of such lists, i.e. the narrative itself shows us how such lists might have been used. In both cases, the introductions to the lists suggest that the list represents a poet's catalogue of tales. This is relevant not only in the light of its contents, but also in the light of what is lacking: the lists do not aim to be exhaustive and do not contain many other types of literature. The legal and social contexts against which the tale lists must be understood show that distinctions made between texts go beyond mere enumeration and carry implications beyond those of a simple taxonomic exercise: the sorts of tales a poet was expected—and allowed—to recite were directly related to his social standing.¹²¹⁶ The interaction of medieval Irish writers with their textual culture at this level indicates a strong awareness of literature and its functions.

Implications for our understanding of the *físi*

The value of these lists lies to a large extent in their function as witnesses to the date at which certain tales or tale-types were believed to be known. Their date of composition, however, remains uncertain. Proinsias Mac Cana believed that these

¹²¹⁴ See, for instance, Wright, C.D., 'The Irish 'Enumerative Style' in Old English Homiletic Literature, Especially Vercelli Homily IX', *CMCS* 18 (1989) 27-73 and chapter 2 'The Enumerative Style in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England' in Wright, *The Irish Tradition*.

¹²¹⁵ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, pp. 41, 64-5.

¹²¹⁶ For further details see Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*; Breatnach, L. (ed. and trans.), *Uraicecht na Ríar: The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 2 (Dublin: DIAS, 1987).

lists contained a common core X which consisted of all the tales A and B had in common, and which was itself a compilation of an earlier version O and the appendix. Accepting a tenth-century date for the compilation of *Airec Menman meic Coise*, he proposes that the common core of A and B—thus X—must also date to the tenth century, but that the appendix (or part of it) may date to the twelfth.¹²¹⁷ Gregory Toner, on the other hand, argues, on the basis of a metrical analysis, that “all of the categories in the main section of list A were already present in the earliest reconstructable form of the list, viz. O”.¹²¹⁸ His analysis is, to my mind, confirmed by the list in the introduction to A, which reads: *togla ⁊ tána ⁊ tochmarca, catha ⁊ uatha ⁊ immrama, oiite ⁊ fessa ⁊ forbasa, echtrada ⁊ aithid ⁊ airgne*.¹²¹⁹ This list not only represents the exact order in which the categories are listed, but is also matched exactly by the copies of list C. There is, moreover, a clear mnemonic metrical pattern to this line, dividing it into a quatrain in which each line carries seven stresses and ends in a trisyllable.¹²²⁰ The fact that this list is omitted in B, where the order of the categories is adjusted to the context of *Airec Menman*, merely confirms that list B is an independent adaptation of X. While Toner provides a new interpretation of the transmission history, unfortunately his solution provides only little more certainty regarding the date of composition. He argues that, while X is derivative of O, X could have been written as late as the twelfth century, while O was written in the tenth century at the earliest, on the basis of the content of tales included in it. Such a date, however, is only acceptable if we consider B as completely separate from X or assume that *Airec Menman* is incorrectly dated. In the light of these uncertainties, we cannot as yet narrow down the provenance of the titles in O and X further than to say that the greater part of the list is likely to have been in existence by the tenth century.

Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the *físi*, which are listed in the appendix, were part of the original tale list. Nor are most of the texts referred to otherwise preserved under the names assigned to them there. Apart from the *Fís Fursa*, it lists texts normally known as *baile*: namely, *Fís mná Nemid*, *Fís Conchobair*, *Fís Cuind*. The latter is listed with the additional “.i. Baile in Scáil”. Gregory Toner observes

¹²¹⁷ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, pp. 66, 83-4.

¹²¹⁸ Toner, 'Reconstructing', p. 112.

¹²¹⁹ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, p. 41.

¹²²⁰ In the example quoted the last line appears defective, but John Carey has pointed out to me that disyllables with internal consonant clusters—especially when, as here with *oirne*, the cluster arises from syncope—can count as trisyllables in *rosc* and similar types of composition (pers. comm.). The order of the nouns is confirmed in all three texts.

that very little of the paired alliteration that he considers a diagnostic marker for the earlier list O is evident in the appendix, and even though some of it could be recognised in the list of *físi*, he admits that “the small number of titles involved means that paired alliteration would have been almost inevitable”.¹²²¹ Rather the fact that these tales, and in particular *Fís Cuind* are normally known by different titles, “appears to show that this form was deliberately chosen so as to produce paired alliteration”.¹²²² Though the tale lists appear to reflect a general attempt towards taxonomy, the titles included are, at least on the evidence of *Airec Menman Uraird meic Coise*, contextualised as *scéla* suitable to a poet, and we might question whether we should, in fact, expect to find eschatological *físi* there at all. The tales included in these lists are hardly of the ecclesiastical kind: only certain *immrama* and *baile* have ecclesiastical affiliations.¹²²³ In this light, it might indeed be a more attractive possibility that the word was simply chosen as a variant for *baile* due to its ‘otherworldly’ connotations. Yet, as discussed in chapter 3.1.1, there appears to be no evidence that the word *baile* is otherwise associated with *físi*. At best, then, the lists confirm that by the twelfth century at the latest (the date of the manuscript), the title *fís* was recognised, but it cannot tell us much more about the value of the title.

¹²²¹ Toner, 'Reconstructing', p. 111.

¹²²² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹²²³ Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales*, p. 75.

Appendix D: Vita Prima S. Fursei §§ 1-10

As mentioned in chapter 2, this appendix presents an analysis of the first ten paragraphs of *VF*, based on its earliest manuscripts, that is, *H* (edd. Rackham, Carozzi and Ciccarese),¹²²⁴ *Rh* (ed. Carozzi), *S* (ed. Ciccarese), and *Sa* (ed. Heist), with Bede's *HE* (*B*). The reference text for the comparison is Ciccarese's critical edition. To limit the size of this appendix, the first ten paragraphs only were analysed, with the aim of providing a sample sizable enough to be representative. In this sample §8 had to be included, as it contains the most significant variation, as previously pointed out by Carozzi. The full text of the first ten paragraphs is given below.

Significant agreement:¹²²⁵

H-Rh contra alia

§2 niueis: niuiis *H Rh^{ac}*

§2 parentesque: parentes *H Rh^{ac}*

§4 uespertinali: uespertinale *H^{ac} Rh^{ac}*

§4 quali: quale *H^{ac} Rh^{ac}*

§8 qui: quia *H Rh^{ac}*

§8 Quartus uero ... inde sunt: *om. H Rh^{ac}*

§8 grandis iste ignis: grandis est iste *H Rh^{ac}*

§8 et duo sancti angeli utroque latere: *om. H, Rh^{mg}*

§9 in terra: in terram *H* (super) terram

§9 pauci non: non *H^{sl} om. Rh*

*§3 distinctim: distincti *H* distincti **Rh*

*§8 distantes: distantibus *H *Rh*

S-Sa contra alia

§1 per diuinam gratiam prouidentibus: per diuinam prouidentiam commisus *S* per diuine gratie prouidentiam commisus *Sa*

§1 illum omnium affectus: illum honorum affectuum *S* illum bonorum (poss. for honorum) affectuum *Sa*

§1 largus: assiduus *S Sa*

§3 conspectus: conspectusque *S Sa*

§3 illi: illius *S Sa*

¹²²⁴ While compiling this comparison I discovered a significant number of oversights in Rackham's edition as well as the odd error in Carozzi's. The text of *H* has, therefore, been cross-referenced against all editions as well as against a microfilm facsimile. Where the editors' readings differ this has been indicated by means of footnotes.

¹²²⁵ Significant agreement excludes purely orthographical (non-grammatical) spelling. In particular *H-Rh^{ac}* regularly share certain spellings with minor orthographical alterations, e.g. §4 petiuitque: petiitque *H* petiitque *Rh^{ac}*; §4 communionem: commonionem *H^{ac} Rh^{ac}*; §6 audiri: audire, *H^{ac} Rh^{ac}*. As above, superscript ^{ac} and ^{pc} refer to *ante* and *post correctionem*. Superscript ^{mg} and ^{sl} indicate an entry in the margin or above the line. Lemmas in Carozzi which are incompletely marked as *Rh* (without specifying the relevant text layer) have been regarded less reliable; they have been marked with an asterisk *.

- §3 mira certitudine distinctim nihil corporeae potuit uidere formae: perspicue distinctionem corporeae non posset uidere formae *S Sa*
§3 uersiculi: uersiculum *S Sa*
§4 ac paulatim [*om. paulatim H*]: ac plangentium *S* plangentium ac paulatim *Sa*
§4 transiens: transiet *S Sa*
§6 bellicantes: bellicantia *S bellantia Sa*
§6 igneas: ignitas *S Sa*
§6 ratiocinando dixit: rationem posuit cum eis quando *S Sa*
§6 peccatori: peccatoribus *S Sa* [peccatoribus **Rh*?]
§8 dimissa sunt: dimittuntur *S* dimituntur *Sa*
§9 daemonia: quattuor daemonia *S* iiiiior demonia *Sa*
§9 possumus: poterimus *S Sa*
§9 fuerunt: fuere *S Sa*
§10 uictus inimicus: uictus sex uicibus diabolus *S Sa*

***S-Rh^{pc}-Sa-B* contra alia**

See §8 below for a parallel representation of the texts.

***Rh^{pc}-Sa-B* contra alia**

- §8 sicut: sicut enim *B Sa* enim *Rh^{sl}*

***Rh^{pc}-Sa* contra alia**

- §8 ignes uero crescentes: ignibus ... crescentibus *Rh^{pc} Sa*

***S-*Rh* contra alia**

- (*Rh* is most likely to indicate *Rh^{pc}* here but the editor fails to indicate this clearly)
§7 accipiat: accipiet *S *Rh*

***S-*Rh-Sa* contra alia**

- §2 spiritalia spiritalibus: spiritalia *om. S Sa *Rh* (spiritalibus *om. H*)
§3 cantabant quidem: cantabantque *S Sa* cantabuntque **Rhⁱ*
§8 uoluntatem: uoluptatem *S Sa *Rh*
§10 uictus inimicus: uictus diabolus **Rh* uictus [sex uicibus] diabolus *S Sa*

***S-Rh^{ac}* contra alia**

- §3 Tunc: Tuncque *S Rh^{ac}* (not strictly diagnostic)
§6 nigredine: nigritudine *S* nigretudine *Rh^{ac}* (*om. H*) (*lectio difficilior*)

***S-Rh^{ac}-H* contra alia**

- §6 a dextris: ad dextris *S Rh^{ac} H*

***S-H* contra alia**

- §3 pulchritudine: pulchritudinem *S H*
§6 crispantem: crispantem *S H* (*lectio difficilior*)
§8 ignes uero crescentes: ignis ... crescens *S* ignes>ignis crescentes>crescens *H*

ⁱ §3 *cantabunt quidem*: The agreement here appears to be the result of an error in *H*. Only *H* reads *quidem* here, if I understand Ciccarese's apparatus correctly. If so, *cantabant quidem* could be the result of a misreading of *catabantque* and the first part of the following word, *dimidium*. This would explain *H*'s unlikely *medio uersiculo*. According to Ciccarese's apparatus MSS *AL* (derived from *H*) read *cantabant dimidio*, which would support the notion that *quidem* is the result of an error in *H*.

Conclusion

Both the textual variants and the text comparison for §8 *Mentientes ... his similia* demonstrate that *Sa* is based on a version of *S*. That it was not based on *S* itself is clear from examples such as *pertransiens S : per medium eorum transiens Sa(HRh)* in l. 85-6 below. The variants in §8 similarly indicate that a version of *S* was also the source for the scribe of *Rh^{pc}* and for Bede's *HE* III.19, pushing the date for that branch of the text back nearly two centuries prior to the oldest surviving copy. The scribes of both have altered their texts somewhat; Bede notably changes the case endings of the verbs to the first plural. On one occasion only *Sa-Rh^{pc}* agree against *S*: the occurrence of dative *ignibus ... crescentibus* in both suggests that *S* (or a copy of it) may also have contained this reading. Further connections between the witnesses of branch B is tenuously suggested by such examples as §10 *uictus inimicus : uicitus diabolus* and §8 *uoluntatem : uoluptatem*. In addition, it is obvious that there is a close connection between *H* and *Rh^{ac}*.

Some agreement between *S* and *H/Rh^{ac}* can also be observed. Where this incidental agreement between *S* and *H* or *Rh^{ac}* contrasts with Ciccarese's edition, based partially on MSS of later date than *HS*, this likely indicates no more than that the later manuscripts deviate from the original at this point. In the case of *nigretudine* and *crispitantem* (l. 88) it is not inconceivable that these forms, which appear to belong to the original, were adjusted to the more common *nigredine* and *crispantem* in younger manuscripts. Similarly, the forms *ad* (in *ad dextris*, l. 83) and *pulchritudinem* are easily corrected to (arguably better) *a dextris* and *pulchritudine* by subsequent copyists. The latter could, of course, also easily be the result of a missing *m*-stroke. The correction of *crescentes* to singular *crescens* in *H* on the model of *S* may be coincidence, as it is the only example of this kind.

Vita Prima S. Fursei §§1-10

§1

Fuit uir uitae uenerabilis Furseus nomine, nobilis quidem genere sed nobilior fide, saeculi dignitate inter suos clarus sed in diuinorum munerum gratia ubique praecipuus. Huius uiri infantia sacris quibusdam miraculorum praesagiis apparentibus fulgebat; summis
5 etiam sacerdotibus per diuinam gratiam prouidentibus, sacris litteris et monasticis erudiebatur disciplinis. Crescente uero aetate et gratia prouidentiae, erga illum omnium affectus cotidie crescebat. Erat enim forma praecipuus, corpore castus, mente deuotus, affabilis colloquio, amabilis aspectu, prudentia praeditus, temperantia clarus, in interna
10 fortitudine firmus, censura iustitiae stabilis, longanimitate largus, patientia robustus, humilitate mansuetus, caritate sollicitus, et ita in eum omnium uirtutem decorem sapientia adornabat, ut secundum apostolum sermo illius semper in gratia sale esset conditus.

1 Fuit...fide: Erat autem uir iste de nobilissimo genere Scottorum, sed longe animo quam carne nobilior *B* · 1 uitae: uiae *H* · 3-6 Huius...disciplinis: Ab ipso tempore pueritiae suae curam non modicam lectionibus sacris simul et monasticis exhibebat disciplinis *B* · 3 ubique: *om.* *S* · 4 apparentibus fulgebat: pollebat¹²²⁶ apparentibus *S* · 5 gratiam prouidentibus: prouidentiam commisit *S* *Sa* · 5 sacris...disciplinis: non modicum lectionibus sacris simul et monasticis exhibebat disciplinis *B* 7 illum omnium affectus: illum honorum affectum *S* illum bonorum affectum *Sa* · 10 largus: assiduus *S* *Sa* · 11 ita...decorum: ita eum decor sapientiae omnium *S* · 11-2 in eum: in eo *Sa* · 13 esset: *om.* *H*

§2

Bonorum ergo operum et gratia plenus, patriam parentesque
15 relinquens, sacrae scripturae studiis aliquot uacabat annis ac sufficienter instructus, monasterium in quodam construxit loco, ubi undique religionis confluentibus uiris,¹²²⁷ aliquos etiam parentum pia sollicitudine euocare curauit. Hac ex causa dum patriam parentesque uisitare properaret et inter illos sacri uerbi semina spiritalia spiritalibus
20 seminaret eloquiis, quadam die corporis egrotantis molestia corripitur ac deinde ad paternam, amicis suggerentibus, commigrauit domum. Quo illo super alterius manum innitente, perrexit ac haud longe a

¹²²⁶ Probably an error. 'exert power over'.

¹²²⁷ Bede alters this part of the text to read that Fursa founded a monastery 'where he could more freely devote himself to his divine studies' (*in quo liberius caelestibus studiis uacaret*). *HE*, pp. 170-1.

domo uespertinalem exorsus psalmodiam, orationi intentus, tenebris subito circumdatus restitit; nec enim pedes mouere infirmatus ualebat, 25 sed quasi iam mortuus ad proximam deportatus est casam. Et cum se tenebrarum caligine circumdare uidisset, quattuor manus desuper ad se extensas conspexit, tenentesque illum per brachia, niueis subuolabant pennis. Manus quippe sub pennis erant, quae illum ex utraque parte sustinebant, et quasi per caliginem angelica cernebat 30 corpora. Altius uero perueniens, mirifico splendorum fulgore facies sanctorum cernebat angelorum uel, ut certius dicam, claritatem eximiae lucis ex ipsis angelicis intuebatur conspectibus, nec aliquid corporeum nisi luminis claritatem potuit uidere. Tertium quoque angelum armatum scuto candido et fulgoreo gladio, claritate praecipuum, se 35 praecedere conspexit.

14 et: *om. Sa* · 14 patriam: *om. H* · 15 sacrae: *om. H* · 15-6 ac...instructus: instructus quidem *S* · 17 *post* parentum *add*: suorum *Sa* · 18 parentesque: parentes *H Rh^{ac}* · 19 uisitare: ui<si>tare *Sa* · 19 et: ut *S* · 19 spiritalia: *om. S Sa *Rh¹²²⁸* · 20 eloquiis: eloquio *H* · 20 molestia corripitur: ubi correptus infirmitate *B* · 21 suggerentibus: conmonentibus *H* · 21 commigrauit: migrauit *H* · 22 Quo illo: quam ille *H om. illo Sa* · 22 manum innitente: manu intente¹²²⁹ *H* · 22 ac: *om. S* Hac *H* · 23 orationi intentus: *corr.* orationem > orationi intentis *H* · 24 restitit: restetit *H* stetit *S* · 25 casam: causam *Rh^{ac}* · 26 circumdare: circumdari *Sa *Rh* · 26 uidisset quattuor manus: uideret tres manos *H* · 27 niueis: niuiis *H Rh^{ac}* · 28 subuolabant: subuolabunt *H* subuolabat *Rh^{ac}* · 28 pennis: *om. H* · 28 manus: manos *H* · 29 parte: parte *Rh^{sl}* · 29 angelica: *om. H* · 29 cernebat: cernebant *Rh^{ac}* · 30 spendentes: splendente *H* · 31 uel ut: ubi *Sa* · 31 dicam: dic<t>am *Sa* · 32 ipsis: ipses *H* · 33-4 potuit...gladio: *om. H* · 34 fulgoreo gladio: fulgureo nimium gladio *Sa* · 35 conspexit: conspexit *S*

§3

Hi tres caelicolae, splendentes pari fulgore, mirae suauitatis dulcedinem alarum sonitu carminum modolamine conspectus pulchritudine illi animae inserebant. Canebant autem uno incipiente: 40 *'Ibunt sancti de uirtute in uirtutem, uidebitur deus deorum in Sion'*,¹²³⁰ eratque in carmine eleuatio et ad finem positio. Audiebat quoque aliud quasi ignotum canticum multorum milium angelorum,

¹²²⁸ There is no entry for *Rh* listed in Carozzi's apparatus, but the word is omitted from his edition, whereas his other two manuscripts do record it. Consequently I take his main text (drawn from *H* and *Rh*) to reflect *Rh* in this case.

¹²²⁹ Possibly the result of a missing expansion stroke, 'hands out-stretched'.

¹²³⁰ Ps 83:8.

unde pauca uix poterat intellegere: ‘*Exierunt obuiam Christo*’. Facies
 uero omnium, in quantum intellegere potuit, angelorum pari
 similitudine uidebat, quamuis propter claritatem luminis mira
 45 certitudine distinctim nihil corporeae potuit uidere formae. Tunc unus
 ex supernis agminibus armato praecedentique angelo iussit ad corpus
 uenerandum reducere uirum suamque secum deferre debere
 sollicitudinem. Protinus ergo sancti oboedientes angeli, quo uenerant,
 iter repedarunt. Tunc primo uir sanctus se corpore exutum
 50 cognoscens, sanctis comitibus quo se deferebant inquit; sanctusque
 angelus a dextris consistens dixit eum oportere proprium corpus
 suscipere, quoadusque debitam reportaret sollicitudinem. Tunc uir
 sanctus tedio separandi a societate angelica affectus dixit se ab eis
 separare noluisse. Angelus domini sanctus respondit: ‘Ad te, completa
 55 praedicta sollicitudine, suscipiendum reuertemur’; cantabant quidem
 dimidium uersiculi: ‘*Videbitur Deus deorum in Sion*’.

36 caelicolae: caeli colore *Rh^{ac}* · 36 fulgore: fulgoreo *S* · 37
 dulcedinem: dulcedine *H* · 37 sonitu: sonitum *H* · 37-40
 carminum...Sion: angelicorum agminum et aspectus intueri et laudes
 beatas meruit audire. Referre autem erat solitus, quod aperte eos inter
 alia resonare audiret: ‘Ibunt sancti de uirtute in uirtutem’ et iterum
 ‘Videbitur Deus deorum in Sion’ *B* · 37 conspectus: conspectusque *S*
Sa conspexitur *H* · 38 pulchritudine: pulchritudinem *S H* · 38 illi: illius
S Sa ill\|a/e *H^{pc}* ille *Rh^{ac}* illam *Rh^{pc}* · 38 animae: animam *Rh^{pc}* · 38
 inserebant: infereba\|n/t *H^{pc}* **Rh* inferebant *Sa* · 38 canebant:
 canebantque enim *Sa* · 40 finem: infimum *Sa* · 42 *post* intellegere *add*
 hoc est *S* · 42 *ante* obuiam *add* autem *S* · 43 similitudine:
 similitudinem *H* · 44-45 mira...formae: perspicue distinctionem
 corporeae non posset uidere formae *S Sa* · 44 distinctim: distincti *H*
 **Rh* · 45 formae: *om.* *H* · 46 armato: armatam *S* · 46 praecedentique:
 precedentemque *S* praecedente *H* · 46 angelo: angelum *S* · 46
 uenerandum: uenerandus *S* · 47 uirum: *om.* **Rh* · 47 secum: secus *Sa* ·
 47 deferre: reducere *Rh^{ac}* · 47 debere: *om.* *H Sa^{mg}* · 48 iter: itinere *H^{pc}* ·
 48 primo: primum *H* · 49 corpore: a corpore *S* · 49 sanctis: a sanctis *Sa*
 · 50 deferebant: deferrent *Sa* · 50 inquit: *corr.* inquiret>inquit *H* ·
 50 angelus: angelos *Rh^{ac}* · 50-1 eum oportere: ei Oportet te *Sa* · 51
 reportaret: reportes *Sa* · 52 Tunc: tuncque *S* tunque hac *Rh^{ac}* · 52
 separandi: sperande *Sa* · 52 societate angelica: societatis angelice *Sa* ·
 55 cantabant quidem: cantabantque *S *Rh Sa* · 55 dimidium: medio *H*
 · 55 uersiculi: uersiculum *S Sa*

§4

Tunc qualiter anima in corpus intrauerit huius carminis suauitate laetificata, intellegere non potuit. Tuncque pullorum cantu, roseo colore uultum perfusus, in momento temporis anglicis cessantibus
 60 carminibus audiuit uerba admirantium; ac paulatim uestimentis superpositis mouentibus denudauerunt faciem eius. Tunc uir dei circum adstantibus dixit: ‘Quid stupentes sonitus inquietos emittitis?’ At illi respondentes omnem rei referebant ei ordinem, qualiter uespertinali hora transiens usque ad gallorum cantus corpus exanime
 65 in medio seruassent. At ille sedens angelicamque claritatem ac dulcedinem mente reuoluens, de quali sollicitudine ammonitus fuisset pertractans, maestus erat quod non habebat ibidem sapientem hominem qui ea quae uiderat clare exponere potuisset, ne reuertentibus angelis eum inuenissent imparatum. Petiuitque et accepit
 70 sacri corporis et sanguinis communionem uixitque infirmus ipso die et altero.

57 in: *om. Sa* · 57 intrauerit: intrauit *Sa* · 58 roseo: subroseo *Sa* · 59 uultum perfusus: ¹²³¹ uultu perfusus *S* uultu perfuso **Rh* · 60 *post* admirantium *add* atque *Sa* · 60 ac: *post* ac *add* plangentium *S ante* ac *add* plangentium *Sa* · 60 paulatim: *om. S* palatium *H* · 60 uestimentis: uestimentum *H* uestimenta *Rh^{pc}* · 61 superpositis: superposita *Rh^{pc}* · 62 circum adstantibus: circumastantibus *S* circumstantibus *Sa* · 62 emittitis: emttis *Rh^{ac}* · 64 uespertinali...exanime: a uespera usque ad galli cantum corpore exutus *B* · 64 transiens: transiset *S* transiset et *Sa* · 66 quali: *corr.* quale > quali *H* quale *Rh^{ac}* · 67 pertractans: ¹²³² pertractabat *Sa* · 67 *post* maestus *add* quoque *Sa* · 68 ea quae: quia que *Rh^{ac}* cui *Sa* · 69 reuertentibus: reuertenteis ¹²³³ *H* reuertibus *Rh^{ac}* reuertentes *Sa* · 69 angelis: angeli *Sa* · 69 eum: *om. H* · 69 petiuitque: petiitque *H* petitque **Rh* · 70 communionem: communicationem *Sa*

§5

Medio uero nocte tertia feria, parentibus et cognatis multisque uicinis inlustrem uirum uisitantibus, tenebris inruentibus, pedes eius frigore ingrauari duruerunt; manibusque in oratione extensis, laetus excepit
 75 mortem. Recordabatur enim iocundissimae uisionis, quam per eadem

¹²³¹ Rackham edits *reuolti* against both Ciccarese and Carozzi as a result of the slightly odd word spacing in this line as ‘roseocolo reuul tumper fusu/s/inmomento’.

¹²³² Rackham erroneously edits *protractans*.

¹²³³ There is a problem here: the editors present three different readings for *H*: Rackham edits *reuertenti eis*; Ciccarese edits *reuertentibus (ac)*; Carozzi edits *reuertentes (ac)*. From what I can tell, there was an attempt at a correction, but as it stands the sequence of letters appears to be *-teis*.

signa uiderat antea, decidensque in lectum quasi somno grauatus,
 audiuit horribiles magnae multitudinis uoces clamantium atque illum
 exire conpellentium. Apertisque oculis, nullum nisi tres supradictos
 sanctos uidit angelos, duos utroque¹²³⁴ latere positos, tertium uero
 80 armatum ad suum stetisse caput. Mirumque in modum humanis
 conspectibus ac uocibus priuatus sanctos angelos uidit ac illorum
 cantica cum omni suauitatis dulcedine audiebat.

72 tertia...parentibus: .iii. uiri apparentibus *H* · 72 uicinis: *corr.* uecinis
 > uicinis *H* · 73 uirum: *corr.* uerum > uirum *H* · 74 duruerunt:
 durauerunt *Rh^{ac}* dirigu<eru>nt *Sa* · 74 manibusque: manibus *Sa* · 75
 recordabatur: recordatus *H* · 75 iocundissimae: iocunditatem *Sa* · 75
 uisionis: *om.* *Sa* · 76 decidensque: Nunc ergo decidens *Sa* · 76 quasi:
ante quasi *add* uisionis *Sa* · 78 conpellentium: conpellantium *Rh^{ac}* ·
 78-9 supradictos sanctos: supradictus sanctus *H* · 79 *post* duos *add* et
H^{sl} · 80 humanis: hominis *H* · 81 priuatus: prefatus *H* priuatos *Rh^{ac}*
 praeditos *Rh^{pcmg}* · 81 illorum: eorum *H* · 82 omni: omnium *H* · 81 ac:
 atque *Sa* · 82 *post* suauitatis *add* ac *Sa*

§6

Tunc angelus domini qui a dextris eius erat consolans eum dixit: ‘*Noli
 timere, defensionem habes*’.¹²³⁵ Leuantibusque eum angelis, nihil tecti
 85 aut domus aspiciens, ululatus et clamores daemoniorum per medium
 eorum transiens audiuit, unum ex illis dicentem: ‘Antecedamus et ante
 faciem illius bella commoueamus’. Tunc uidit nigram nubem a sinistra
 parte crispantem ante faciem illius bellicam aciem constituentem.
 Corpora autem daemoniorum, in quantum animae illius apparere
 90 poterant, plena deformitate et nigredine, collo extento, macie
 squalentia ac omni horrore plena, capite in similitudinem caccabi
 intumescente. Quando uero uolabant uel quando pugnabant, nullam
 corporis formam nisi horribilem et uolaticam¹²³⁶ umbram uidere
 poterat. Sed quis prudentium lectorum ignorat haec etiam de inmundis
 95 spiritibus ad terrorem uidentis animae fieri? Et facies eorum numquam
 potuit uidere propter horrorem tenebrarum, sicut nec sanctorum
 angelorum propter nimiam claritatem. Bellicantes¹²³⁷ uero daemonia

¹²³⁴ Rackham edits *ueroque* against Ciccarese and Carozzi.

¹²³⁵ Jerome *Epistle 22 Ad Eustochium* §3 (‘*Noli timere*’).

¹²³⁶ Rackham edits *uolatilem* against Ciccarese and Carozzi.

¹²³⁷ Carozzi edits *bellantia*, the pres. act. participle (neut. pl) of *bello*. Ciccarese on the other hand respects *bellicantes*. The form is perhaps derived from a verb *bellicare* (from the adjective *bellicus*, attested in DuCange). It is possible that there is wordplay here on *belli* ‘war’ and *cantare*, referring to the battle of words that is initiating here. The –es ending emulates the m/f. p.l of the ppl, while *S* opts for the neut. pl. The noun appears to be derived from *daemonium* (Classic, rare) in neut.pl.

igneas sagittas iactabant contra illos, sed angelico scuto omnia tela
 nequissima extinguebantur.¹²³⁸ Cadebant uero aduersarii ante
 100 conspectum pugnantis angeli, qui quasi ratiocinando dixit: ‘Nolite
 tardare iter nostrum, quia hic homo non est particeps perditionis
 uestrae’. Contradicente aduersario ac blasphemante iniustum esse Deo
 hominem peccatori consentientem nihil damnationis habere, cum
 scriptum sit: *Non solum qui faciunt, sed etiam qui consentiunt*
 105 *facientibus, digni sunt morte.*¹²³⁹ Pugnante uero angelo, existimabat
 uir sanctus clamorem pugnae et uociferantium daemoniorum in
 omnem terram audiri.

83 a dextris: ad dextris *S H Rh^{ac}* · 83 angelis: angelis eum *Rh* · 83 erat:
 aderat *Sa* · 84 habes: habens *S* · 85 aut: *corr.* ait > aut *H* · 85 clamores:
 clamor *H* · 85 daemoniorum: demonum audiens (*over erasure*) *Sa* · 85
 medium: medio *H* · 85-6 per...transiens: pertransiens *S* · 86 unum:
 uno *Rh^{ac}* · 86 et: *om.* *S* et *Rh^{sl}* · 88 crispantem: crispitantem *S H* · 88
 constituentem: consistentem *Sa* · 89 daemoniorum: demonum *Sa* · 89
 apparere: appare *H* · 90 poterant: potera<n>t *Sa* · 90 et nigredine: et
 nigritudine *S Rh^{ac}* · 90 extento: *corr.* extenso > extenso *H* · 90 macie:
 macies *Rh^{ac}* · 91 squalentia: sallantia *Rh^{ac}* squallantia *Rh^{pc}* sca’entia *Sa*
 · similitudinem: similitudine enei *Sa* · 92 uel quando pugnant: *om.* *H*
 · 93 formam: umbram *H* · 93 horribilem: horrorem *Sa* · 94 Sed: sid *Sa*
 · 94 lectorum...inmundis: lectionum ignoret hoc ab immundis *Sa* · 95
 terrorem: terrore *H* · 95 uidentis: *corr.* uidentes > uidentis *H* · 95
 numquam: nuncquam *Sa* · 96 horrorem: errorem *Rh^{ac}* · 97 bellicantes:
 bellicantia *S* bellantia *Sa* · 98 igneas: ignitas *S Sa* · 98 tela: *om.* *H* · 99
 nequissima: nequissimi *S* · 100 conspectum: cons\pec/tum *H* · 100
 ratiocinando dixit: rationem posuit cum eis quando¹²⁴⁰ *S Sa* ratio
 cinnando **Rh corr.* rationando > ratiocinando *H* · 100 dixit: dixerat
 · 100 nolite: noli *Rh^{ac}* · 102 contradicente aduersario: contradicentes
 aduersarii *H^{pc}* per contra aduersario *Rh^{ac}* contradicebat autem
 aduersarius *Sa* · 102 blasphemante: blasphemantes *H* bla<s>phemans
 dicebat *Sa* · Deo: *om.* *Sa* · 103 peccatori: peccatoribus *corr.* (*over*
erasure) *S *Rh Sa* · 103 nihil...habere: nec a pena debere esse
 immune *Sa* · 103 damnationis: dampnationis *Rh^{ac}* · 103-4 cum
 scriptum: conscriptum *Rh^{ac}* · 105 pugnante: *corr.* pugnaentes >
 pugnantibus *H* pugantis *Sa* · 105 angelo: angelis *H* · 106 pugnae:
 pugne demoniorum *Sa*

¹²³⁸ Eph. 6:16 *in omnibus sumentes scutum fidei in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere*, ‘In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.’

¹²³⁹ Rom. 1:32.

¹²⁴⁰ Matt. 25:19 *et posuit rationem cum eis*, ‘and reckoned with them’.

§7

- Cumque uictus Satanus sicut contritus coluber caput releuasset¹²⁴¹
 uenenosum, dixit: ‘Otiosos sermones saepe protulit,¹²⁴² nec debere
 110 eum inlaesum uita perfrui beata.’¹²⁴³ Sanctus angelus dixit: ‘Nisi
 principalia protuleris crimina, propter minima non peribit.’ Accusator
 antiquus dixit: ‘Scriptum est: *Si non remiseritis hominibus peccata*
eorum, nec pater uester caelestis dimittet uobis peccata
uestra.’¹²⁴⁴ Sanctus angelus respondit: ‘Ubi se uindicauit uel cui
 115 iniuriam fecit?’ Diabolus dixit: ‘Non est scriptum: *si non uindicetis*,
 sed: *si non remiseritis de cordibus uestris.*’¹²⁴⁵ Sanctus angelus
 excusans dixit: ‘Indulgentiam in corde habuit, sed consuetudine
 humana continuit’. Diabolus respondit: ‘Sicut accepit malum ex
 consuetudine, ita accipiat uindictam a superno iudice’. Dixit angelus
 120 domini: ‘Iudicemur ante dominum’. Victus inimicus uiperea restaurat
 uenena dicens: ‘Si iustus est deus, hic homo non intrabit in regnum
 caelorum. Scriptum est enim: *Nisi conuersi fueritis et efficiamini sicut*
paruuli, non intrabitis in regnum caelorum.’¹²⁴⁶ Hoc uerbum minime
 impleuit.’ Sanctus angelus dixit: ‘Iudicemur ante dominum’.
 125 Praeliante sancto angelo contriti sunt aduersarii.

108 *ante* cumque *add* ratio **Rh* · 109 uenenosum: uenosum *Rh^{ac}* · 109
 debere: deberi *H* · 109-10 nec...eum: et ideo non debere *Sa* · 110 uita:
 uitam *S* · 110 beata: beatam *S* · 110 dixit: respondit *Sa* · 111 propter:
 propter illa *Rh^{acsl}* · 111 accusator: accusat *Sa* · 112 Scriptum est: *om. S*
H Rh Sa · 112 non: nisi *S* · 113 dimittet: dimittat *Rh^{ac}* · 113-4 peccata
 uestra: *corr.* delecta > delicta uestra *H* · 114 angelus: *corr.* angelos >
 angelus *H* arcangelus *Rh^{ac}* archangelus *Rh^{pc}* · 115 non: nonne *Sa* · 116-
 19 Sanctus...iudice: *transp. post.* impleuit *H Rh S* · 116 angelus: *corr.*
 angelos > angelus *H* · 117 indulgentiam: innocentiam *H* · 117-8
 consuetudine humana: consuetudinem humanam *H* · 119 accipiat:
 accipiet *H* · 119 a: ex *Sa* · 119-20 Dixit...domini: Sanctus angelus
 dixit *Sa* · 120 *ante* Victus *add* ter *S add* ratio *Rh add* tunc *Sa* · 121
 deus: dominum *H* · 123 regnum: regno *H* · 124 impleuit: implebit *H* ·
 124 sanctus angelus: angelus domini *Sa* · 125 sunt: *om. H*

¹²⁴¹ Rackham edits *reuelesse* against Ciccarese and Carozzi.

¹²⁴² Rackham edits *pertulit*, and below, *pertuleris*, against Ciccarese and Carozzi.

¹²⁴³ Ps. 36:3 according to Gr., but I have not been able to verify this. Cf. Matt. 12:36 *Dico autem vobis quoniam omne verbum otiosum, quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent rationem de eo in die iudicii*, ‘But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgement’

¹²⁴⁴ Mark 11:26.

¹²⁴⁵ Matt. 18:35.

¹²⁴⁶ Matt. 18:3.

§8¹²⁴⁷

Tunc sanctus angelus, qui a dextris eius erat, dixit: ‘respice mundum’.
Tunc uir sanctus respexit et uidit uallem tenebrosam sub se in imo
positam et uidit quattuor ignes ibidem in aëre aliquibus spatiis a se
distantes. Dixitque rursum sanctus angelus: ‘Qui sunt hi ignes?’ Vir
130 domini se nescire respondit. Cui angelus dixit: ‘Hi sunt quattuor ignes
qui mundum succendunt. Postquam¹²⁴⁸ in baptismo omnia peccata
dimissa sunt, post confessionem et abrenuntiationem diabolo et
operibus eius et pompis,

<p>135 ^Amentientes ea quae promiserunt accendunt ignem mendacii. Alter uero ignis cupiditatis est, qui de mendacio incenditur promissionis et saeculo abrenuntiationis. 140 Tertius uero ignis dissensionis est qui de cupiditate nascitur. Quartus uero ignis est immisericordiae, qui et ipse de dissensione oritur et inde sunt impietas fraus, per quam infirmi 145 sine miseratione spoliuntur, contentiones inuidiae et his similia.</p>	<p>^BUnus mendatii cum hoc quod in baptismo abrenuntiare Satanae et omnibus operibus eius promiserunt minime implent. Alter cupiditatis cum mundi diuitias amoris caelestium praeponerunt. Tertius dissensionis cum animos proximorum etiam in superuacuis rebus offendere non formidant. Quartus impietatis cum infirmiores spoliare et eis fraudem facere pro nihilo ducunt.</p>
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Unusquisque ignem accendit, quia per augmenta malorum peccata ex
culpulis crescunt.’ Ignis uero crescentes in maius effectus est unus, et
150 illi adpropinquabat. Timensque ignem minacem sancto angelo secum
loquenti ait: ‘Ignis mihi adpropinquat’. Cui respondit angelus: ‘Quod
non accendisti non ardebit in te. Licet enim terribilis est et grandis iste
ignis, tamen secundum merita operum singulos examinat, quia
uniuscuiusque cupiditas in isto igne ardebit. Sicut corpus ardet per
155 illicitam uoluntatem, ita et anima ardebit per debitam poenam.’ Tunc
uidit sanctum angelum praecedentem ignem flammam diuidere in
duos muros utroque latere; et duo sancti angeli utroque latere ab igne
defendebant eum.

126 Tunc...mundum: (Cum ergo in altum esset elatus,) iussus est ab
angelis, qui eum ducebant, respicere in mundum. *B* · 126 sanctus: *Sa^{mg}*
· 126 a: ad **Rh* · 127 Tunc...et: At ille oculos in inferiora deflectens *B*

¹²⁴⁷ In ll. 134-47 A encompasses Ciccarese (given), *H* and *Rh^{ac}*; B encompasses *S* (given) *B Rh^{pc}* and *Sa*.

¹²⁴⁸ I am following Carozzi's suggestion to start the new line here and take it to refer to the promises which are the object of the next clause *ea quae promiserunt*.

· 127 *post* uidit *add* quasi *B* · 127 sub: *subtus B* · 128 positam: positum *Rh^{ac}* · 128-29 ibidem...ignes: *Sa^{mg}* · 128 aliquibus spatiis: non multo ab inuicem spatio *Rh^{pc} B* · 129 distantes: distantibus *H *Rh* · 129-31 Dixitque...succendunt: Et interrogans angelos, qui essent hi ignes, audiuit hos esse ignes qui mundum succedentes essent consumturi *B* · 129 sanctus: *om. H* · 129 hi ignes: isti quatuor ignes *Sa* · 130 angelus: sanctus angelus *Sa* · 131 mundum: *om. Sa* · 131-3 Postquam...pompis: *om. B* · 132 dimissa: dimittuntur *S Sa* · 135^A accendunt: accedunt *Rh^{ac}* · 137^A mendacio: *corr. mendatio > mendacio H* · 137^A *post* mendacio *add* secunde *Rh^{ac}* secundo *Rh^{pc}* · 140^A qui: quia *H Rh^{ac}* · 134^B unus: unum *B* unus enim est *Sa* · 135^B abrenuntiare: abrenuntiare nos *B* abrenuntiasse se *Sa* · 136^B operibus: pompis *Sa* · 137^B promiserunt: promissimus *B* · 137^B implent: implemus *B* · 138^B alter: alterum *B* · 139^B caelestium: celesti *Rh^{pc}* 140^B praeponerunt: praeponimus *B* preponunt *Sa* praeponuntur *Rh^{pc}* · 140^B tertius: tertium *B* · 140-1^B terius dissensionis: tertius uero ignis dissensionis est *Rh^{pc}* · 144^B formidant: formidamus *B* · 144^B quartus: quartum *B* quartus uero *Rh^{pc}* 144^B *post* impietatis *add* est *Rh^{pc}* · 145^B *post* infirmiores *add* sine miseratione *Rh^{pc}* · 145^B et eis: *Sa^{mg}* · 147^B ducunt: ducimus *B* · 141-44 Quartus...sunt: *om. H Rh^{ac}* · 145 miseratione: mensuratione *Rh^{ac}* · 148-9 Unusquisque...crescunt: *om. S Sa* · 148 Unusquisque ignem accendit: quique ign<...> accendit *H* · 148 *post* accendit *add* alium *Rh H^{sl}* · 148 augmenta: augmentum *H* · 149-51 Ignes...ait: Crescentes uero paulatim ignes usque adinuicem sese extenderunt, atque inmensam adunati sunt flammam; cumque adpropinquassent, pertimescens ille dicit angelo: ‘Domino, ecce *B* · 149 ignes...crescentes: ignis crescens *S corr. ignes...crescentes > ignis...crescens H* ignibus...crescentibus *Rh^{pc} Sa* · 149 in maius: in magis *H immanus Sa* · 150 *post* timensque *add* uir dei *Sa* · 151 loquenti: loquente *Rh^{ac}* conloquenti > conloquenti *H* · 151 cui...accendisti: At ille ‘Quod non incendisti’ inquit *B* · 152-3 Licet...ignis: nam etsi terribilis iste ac grandis esse rogos uidetur *B* · 152 est: sit *Sa* · 152 grandis iste: grandis est iste *H Rh^{ac}* · 153 secundem: iuxta *B* · 153-4 quia uniuscuiusque: et secundum quod unusquisque crescit *Sa* · 154 isto igne: hoc igni *B* · 154 *post* sicut *add* enim *Rh^{sl} B* · 154 corpus ardet: quis ardet in corpore *B* · 155 uoluntatem: uoluptatem *S *Rh B* · 155 et anima: etiam *H* solutus corpore *B* · 156 sanctum angelum: autem unum de tribus angelis, qui sibi in tota utraque uisione ductores adfuerunt *B* · 156 *post* praecedentem *add* et *Sa* · 156 ignem: ignes *B* · 156 flammam diuidere: flammamque diuidentem *Sa* flammae diuidere *B* · 156-8 in...eum: et duos ab utroque latere circumuolantes ab ignium se periculo defendere *B* · 157 et...latere: *om. H Rh^{mg}* · 158 *ante* defendebant *add* qui *S*

§9

Vidit quoque daemonia inmunda per ignem uolantia, bellum horribile
 160 in medio ignis construentia. Et dixit unus ex illis: '*Seruus qui scit uoluntatem domini sui et non facit digne, plagis uapulabit multis*'.¹²⁴⁹
 Sanctus angelus respondit: 'Quid enim iste de uoluntate domini sui non adimpleuit?' Satanus respondit: 'Scriptum est: *Dona iniquorum reprobant altissimus*;¹²⁵⁰ iste dona iniquorum recepit'. Sanctus angelus
 165 respondit: 'Credidit enim quod unusquisque eorum egisset penitentiam'. Diabolus dixit: 'Ante debuit probare penitentiae perseuerantiam et sic fructum suscipere. *Munera enim excecant oculos sapientium et peruertunt uerba iustorum*'.¹²⁵¹ Sanctus angelus respondit: 'Iudicemur ante dominum.' Fallax diabolus succumbens in
 170 blasphemias contra auctorem erupit, dicens: 'Usque nunc aestimaui deum esse ueracem'. Sanctus angelus respondit: 'Quid enim aliud est?' Procacissimus daemon dixit: 'Quia omne delictum quod non purgatur super terram, in caelo esse uindicandum promisit. Esaia propheta clamante: *Quod si uolueritis et audieritis me, bona terrae comedetis. Quod si nolueritis et me ad iracundiam prouocaueritis, gladius deuorabit uos*'.¹²⁵² Hic homo non purgauit delicta sua in terra, nec uindictam hic recipit. Ubi est ergo iustitia dei?' Sanctus angelus increpans eos dixit: 'Nolite blasphemare, dum nescitis occulta dei iudicia.' Diabolus respondit: 'Quid enim hic occultum?' Sanctus angelus dixit: 'Quamdiu speratur penitentia, comitatur homini diuina misericordia.' Satanus respondit: 'Sed nullus tamen hic locus penitentiae.' Angelus respondit: 'Profunditatem mysteriorum dei ignoratis: fortasse etenim erit.' Diabolus respondit: 'Discedamus ergo, dum iudicandi ratio non est'. Alius uero satellitum
 185 dixit: 'Adhuc restat illi angusta porta per quam nisi pauci non intrant: ibi illum superare possumus: *Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum*'.¹²⁵³ Sanctus angelus respondit: 'Vir iste in proximos suos operatus est bona'. Aduersarius respondit: 'Non sufficit operari bona, nisi etiam sicut semetipsum dilexerit'. Sanctus angelus respondit:
 190 'Fructus dilectionis est bona operari, quia *deus reddet unicuique secundum opera sua*'.¹²⁵⁴ Inprobus daemon dixit: 'Sed quia uerbum dei diligendo non impleuit, damnandus erit'. Pugnante uero turba nefanda, sancti angeli uictores fuerunt.

¹²⁴⁹ Luke 12:47.¹²⁵⁰ Eccles. 34:19.¹²⁵¹ Deut. 16:19.¹²⁵² Isa. 1:19-20¹²⁵³ Matt. 22:39.¹²⁵⁴ Ps 61[62]:13, Matt. 16:27, Rom. 2:6.

159 *ante uidit add postea Rh^{ac}* · 159 quoque: quattuor *S* iiiior *Sa* · 159 ignem: igne *H* · 159 *ante bellum add et Sa* · 160 construentia: construentes *Rh^{ac}* constituentia *Sa* · 161 digne: digna **Rh Sa* · 161 digne plagis: *om. H* · 161 uapulabit multis: uapolauit multum *H* · 162 sanctus...respondit: *om. S* · 162-64 sanctus...altissimus: *transp. post* dicens (1.170) *H* · 162 uoluntate: uoluntatem *H* · 163-4 scriptum...iste: *om. S* · 163-4: dona...iste: *Rh^{mg}* · 164 iste...recepit: *om. H* · 164 *post* recepit *add munera *Rh* · 164 iste: et hic *Sa* · 167 suscipere: recipere *H* · 169 dominum: domini *H* · 170 erupit: prorupit *Sa* · 171 esse: *om. H* · 172 delictum: *corr. delicto > delictum H* · 173 in: de *Sa* · 173 in...promisit: in caelum iudicandum promisit *H* · 174 clamante: clamantes *S* · 176 *post hic add autem Sa* · 176 purgauit: puniuit *Sa* · 177 in terra: in terram *H* super terram *Rh^{mg}* · 177-8 nec...dei: *om. H* · 179 iudicia: iudicii *Rh^{ac}* · 181 comitatur: comititur *Rh^{ac}* · 181 homini: hominem *S Sa *Rh* · 182 *ante angelus add sanctus Rh^{sl}* · 183 mysteriorum: misericordiarum *Rh^{ac}* · 183 *ante erit add hic Sa* · 184 *post dum add hic Sa* · 184 uero: *om. Sa* · 185 non: *H^{sl} om. *Rh* · 186 possumus: poterimus *S* poterimus et est hoc *Sa* · 187 *post ipsum add* hoc non impleuit *S* · 187 sanctus: *om. H* · 189 *post etiam add* próximos *Sa* · 191 secundum: iuxta *Sa* · 191 sed: *om. H* · 192 damnandus: damnandum *Rh^{ac}* dampnandus *Sa* · 192 uero: *om. S *Rh* · 192 pugnante: pugante *Sa* · 193 fuerunt: fuere *S Sa*

§10

Victus inimicus more suo in blasphemiam erupit, dicens: ‘Si deus
195 iniquus non est, et si mendacium et uerbi illius transgressio ei displicet, uir iste poenarum expers non erit. Promisit enim saeculo abrenuntiare, e contrario iste saeculum dilexit, contra apostolicum praeceptum dicentis: *Nolite diligere mundum neque ea quae in mundo sunt*,¹²⁵⁵ et reliqua. Virum hunc nec propriae sponsionis sermo, nec
200 apostoli prohibuit sententia.’ Sanctus angelus respondit: ‘Non sibi soli ea quae sunt saeculi, sed omnibus indigentibus dispensanda dilexit.’ Nefandissimus diabolus dixit: ‘Qualicumque modo diligatur, contra praeceptum diuinum est et contra sponsionum christianitatis in baptismo.’ Victis adversariis angelis uincens, rursum diabolus ad
205 callidas conuertitur accusationes, dicens: ‘Scriptum est: *Nisi adnuntiaueris iniquo iniquitatem suam, sanguinem eius de manu tua requiram*.¹²⁵⁶ Hic non adnuntiauit digne peccantibus penitentiam.’ Sanctus angelis respondit: ‘De hoc enim tempore scriptum est:

¹²⁵⁵ 1 John 2:15.

¹²⁵⁶ Ezek. 3:18.

- Prudens in tempore illo tacebit, quia tempus pessimum est.*¹²⁵⁷
- 210 Quando enim auditores despiciunt uerbum, lingua etiam doctoris loqui praepeditur, dum uidet quod audita praedicatio despicitur.’ Accusator antiquus respondit: ‘Ille tamen usque ad passionem adnuntiare debuit, nec consentire nec tacere.’ In omni uero contradictione daemonum praeualida nimis exstitit pugna; donec iudice domino, triumphantibus
- 215 angelis contritis diuictisque aduersariis, immensa claritate uir sanctus circumfusus est, sanctorumque angelorum choris concinentibus: ‘Nullus labor durus uideri debet, nullum longum tempus quo gloria aeternitatis acquiritur’, laetitia simul et dulcedine complebatur.

195 *ante* Victus *add* Respondit *Rh^{ac}* · 195 *post* Victus *add* sex uicibus *S Sa* · 195 inimicus: diabolus *S Sa *Rh* · 194 erupit: prorupit *H* erumpit **Rh* · 195 si: *om. H* · 195 *post* mendacium *add* non diligit *S* · 196 promisit: precepit (*over erasure*) *H* · 196 saeculo: *corr.* saeculum > saeculo *H* · 197 e: et *e S Sa Rh^{mg}* · 197 iste: *om. S* istud *Rh^{pc}* · 197 saeculum: eum *H* · 198 Nolite diligere: noli <dili>gere *Sa* · 198 in mundo: in mundum *H* · 199 Virum hunc: *corr.* uir iste > uirum istum *H* · 199 *post* Virum *add* ergo *S Sa *Rh* · [201 *post* saeculi *folium deest* (*usq. §11 aduolantes*)] · 202 Nefandissimus...dixit: nefandissimus dixit *Rh^{mg}* · 204 angelis: angelicis **Rh* · 204 *ante* rursum *add* respondit *Rh^{ac}* · 205 accusationes: *om. Sa* (insertion not supplied) · 206-7 requiram de manu tua *S *Rh Sa* · 207 digne: dignam *Sa* · 208 respondit: dixit *Sa* · 209 tempus: temporus *Sa* · 211 praepeditur: praecipitur *Rh^{acsl}* · 211 *post* uidet *add* deus *Sa* · 211 despicitur: despiciatur **Rh* · 212 debuit: debent **Rh* · 214 exstitit: extitit *Sa^{mg}* · 215 *post* angelis *add* sanctis *Sa* *ante* angelis *add* eius *S* · 216 sanctorumque: sanctorum quoque *Sa* · 216 *post* concinentibus *add* hic apud se reputabat quod uidelicet *Sa* · 218 dulcedine complebatur: dulcedo conglobatur *Sa* · §8-10 Vidit autem et daemones per ignem uolantes incendia bellorum contra iustos struere. Sequuntur aduersus ipsum accusations malignorum, defensiones spirituum bonorum... *B*

¹²⁵⁷ Amos 5:13.

Appendix E: VSP Redaction VI

As mentioned in chapter 2, this text is preserved in three manuscripts and was likely composed in the middle of the eighth century. Of these three manuscripts, St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 682, pp. 193-204 (*StG^I*, s. ix, prov. Fulda) contains the only complete copy. Besides the *Visio* this manuscript contains a series of homilies, and the *Visio* is placed between two homilies concerned with the Lord's justice. The copy of *Red. VI* in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 216, f. 126v (*V²*), while slightly older, only contains §§1-3; and the tenth-century copy in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek (Bibliotheca Albertina), MS 1608, ff. 5r-6v (*Le*) only runs as far as §5. *Red. VI* has been edited twice: Theodore Silverstein printed diplomatic editions from *StG^I* and *V²*,¹²⁵⁸ and recently Lenka Jiroušková printed a synoptic edition of all three.¹²⁵⁹ The copy in *Le* was not heretofore known to Silverstein and others; it was first discovered in 1949.¹²⁶⁰ Aside from these editions, the text has been discussed in detail only by a handful of scholars, primarily in relation to Irish vision texts or in discussions on the origins of purgatory.¹²⁶¹ Selections from *StG^I* have been printed or translated in some of these previous discussions,¹²⁶² but to date (to the best of my knowledge) no full translation has been published. Because of the importance of the text for the present study, I have here attempted to provide one, to serve as the basis for my analysis.

It is well known that there are corruptions in the Latin as it stands. The text shows evidence of having been copied from a corrupt exemplar, which contained inaccurate expansions or abbreviations. This is likely the case in, e.g. *arma* (for *ramos*, l.5) as well as the two instances of *enim dant* in §6 for *emendant*. In a number of places expansion strokes or m-strokes appear to have been missing or misinterpreted, e.g. in *succedentes* (l.53), *crutiat* (l.54), *propria paena* (l.64) or the instances of *patiunt* (l.20) and *paciant* (l.51). In addition, there is confusion of tense in some of the verbs and in a number of cases there is confusion of declension or

¹²⁵⁸ Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, pp. 214-8.

¹²⁵⁹ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, pp. 921-4.

¹²⁶⁰ Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli*, p. 277, n. 96. She refers to Siegmund, A., O.S.B., *Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert*, Abhandlungen der bayerischen Benediktiner-Akademie 5 [PhD. diss. University of Munich, 1939] (Munich-Pasing: Filser Verlag, 1949), p. 46, n. 2.

¹²⁶¹ Dumville, 'Towards'; Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish'; Carozzi, *Le voyage*; Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*; Ó Corráin, 'Can We Prove'.

¹²⁶² Carozzi translated various individual phrases in his discussion; Moreira translated §6; and Ó Corráin printed §§3,4, 7-9 and 12, and partially translated §§3-4 on his handout.

case, e.g. in the case of *peccatoris* (1.1, with 2nd declension ending), *clauibus* (1.16, in 3rd declension), *spiritalis* (1.23, as 1/2 adjective), *cathenas* (1.8, for abl. *cathenis*), *diabolos* (1.9, for *diaboli*), *caballum* (1.59) and *caballo* (1.63, both for *caballos*). In some cases, the text is corrupt beyond intelligibility, as for instance in §10, where it appears to describe a heaven full of rewards for informants and torturers. This paragraph is also notably shorter than the others, giving the impression that we may be dealing with a copying error, probably already present in the copyist's source. Further difficulties arise in §4, where it remains uncertain which role the scribe intended to assign to the *matrina*, and especially in §6, in which lexical difficulties abound and which appears to shift tense multiple times, as if the phrases were drawn from different sources. All such difficulties are discussed in the footnotes below. Where they are available, I have opted to refer to the other manuscripts in cases of doubt, such as e.g. in §2, where the characterisation of the devils appears to have been corrupted. On the whole, it seems likely that the scribe of *StG*¹ had an already damaged exemplar in front of him, probably copied by a scribe whose command of Latin was less than satisfactory.

In addition, the text shows evidence of having been compiled from two distinct copies, as is apparent primarily from the change of formula from §6 onwards. Starting with §2, Paul's question is formulated with a form of the verb *peccare*, while the answer contains the phrase *paenitentiam non egerunt* and closes with a formula containing either *propter...propriam paenam* (§2, 3)¹²⁶³ or a variant of *propter hoc agunt mala* (§§4, 5). Starting with §6, the formula for Paul's question changes to include a form of *committere*, and that for the answer contains the phrase *numquam paenituerunt*. The closing formula with *propter...* is much abbreviated in §7 and is absent altogether in §§9 and 10. The break between the two is marked by the insertion in §6 of the questions concerning penance during one's lifetime. In §11, which closes the narrative, duplication is clearly present,¹²⁶⁴ again suggesting the compiler drew from at least two copies.

For this translation I provide *StG*¹ as my main text, with the variants from *V*² and *Le*, as printed by Jiroušková, in the apparatus below each paragraph. Because of the difficulties in the text, I have chosen to present it with minimal editorial

¹²⁶³ In §2 the words *propter hoc* are missing, but are confirmed by *Le*.

¹²⁶⁴ As discussed above in chapter 3.1.3, pp. 112-4.

interference. I have checked the text of *StG*¹ against the manuscript and indicated all expansions and abbreviations with italics—in both previous editions most of these were silently expanded. Erasures or missing letters have been marked with {...}, superscript or marginal insertions with \.../, scribal changes with >, and editorial insertions with [...]. I have not emended the text, but instead provide suggested readings, as well as comments and suggestions by previous editors, in the footnotes.¹²⁶⁵ I have capitalised personal names and provided modern punctuation for readability. The title, printed in bold below, is rubricated in orange in the manuscript. The text has been subdivided into paragraphs to facilitate discussion of its structure.¹²⁶⁶ These are not in the manuscript, where the text is presented in continuous prose. Almost every paragraph consists of a threefold structure of sight-question-answer (see chapter 3 above); this has been indicated in the text with superscript a, b, c before the relevant subsection.

¹²⁶⁵ Readings from previous editors are cited abbreviated as Silv. (for Silverstein) and Jir. (for Jiroušková) respectively.

¹²⁶⁶ The paragraph numbering is similar to that used by Silverstein, but I have counted his paragraph six and seven as one paragraph. Jiroušková counts the first line of paragraph one as a separate paragraph so that her numbering deviates from mine by one; in addition she splits §6 into three paragraphs.

Text and Translation

Incipit castigatio sanctae Paule de hominis peccatoris, qui peccant et emendant.

1-2 In christo nomene incipit uita sancti pauli V² Visio sancti pauli apo{...} Le ·
1 peccatoris] *ms.* peccato\ris/

Here begins Saint Paul's reproof concerning sinful men, who sin and make amends.

§1

Sanctus Paulus ductus est in regnum Dei, ut uideret opera iustorum et poenas pec[194]catorum. ^aIn primo caelo uidit arborem, quae habebat
5 milia arma¹²⁶⁷ et habet totus fructus¹²⁶⁸ in se. ^bEt interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Iste quidem,¹²⁶⁹ Domini,¹²⁷⁰ qui habet totus fructus in se? ^cRespondit ei angelus: Isti sunt unde uiuent iusti et innocentes.

3 *Sanctus* Paulus] Per uerbum dei V² · 3 regnum] regno Le · 3 iustorum] {...} Le ·
4 poenas] poena\s/ StG¹ · 4 poenas peccatorum] penas impiorum V² · 4 primo caelo] primis V² primo celi scripsi Le · 4 uidit] uenit ad V² · 4 arborem] ar{...} florentem Le · 4 quae habebat] qui habet V² qui habuit Le · 5 milia arma] .i. mille .d. quinquaginta rama V² quingenta milia ramos Le · 5 habet] hab& StG¹ ha{...} Le · 5 in se] om. Le · 6 Iste quidem] Istud quid est V² Isti quid Le · 6 Domini] Domine V² · 6 Domini ... se?] peccau{...} Le · 7 Respondit ... sunt] om. V² Hoc est arbor, quae habet quingenta ramarum et ha{...} fructus Le · 7 Isti] iste > isti StG¹ · 7 unde uiuent] Inde uiuunt V² unde iusti uiuunt Le

Saint Paul was led into the Kingdom of God to see the works¹²⁷¹ of the just and the punishments of the sinners. In the first heaven he saw a tree which had a thousand branches and has every fruit in it. And Saint Paul asked: “What is this, Lord, which has every fruit¹²⁷² in it?” The

¹²⁶⁷ leg. *ramos*. This is probably the result of a misinterpretation of an abbreviated form. Note that V² reads *rama* with an incorrect neut. -a ending.

¹²⁶⁸ The manuscript appears to have m-strokes (totū fructū), but I have opted for the acc.pl. on the evidence of V² and Le and the following line.

¹²⁶⁹ leg. *quid* or *quid est*

¹²⁷⁰ leg. *Domine*

¹²⁷¹ One might have expected ‘rewards’; ‘works’ is reminiscent of the often quoted Matt. 16.27; (the Son of Man will) *reddet unicuique secundum opus eius* ‘render to every man according to his works’; or Rev. 2.23: *dabo unicuique vestrum secundum opera uestra* ‘I will give to every one of you according to your works’. Unfortunately, we do not actually learn anything about these good works in the text.

¹²⁷² There is arguably an element of world play on the word’s secondary meaning ‘reward’ in this paragraph, given that the answer to the question reveals this is a place for the just.

angel answered him: “These are¹²⁷³ where the just and the innocent will live.”¹²⁷⁴

§2

^aVenit in alio loco, uidit uiros *et* mulieres cum catenas¹²⁷⁵ ignis, ducebant illos ligatos diabolos¹²⁷⁶, qui stabant ad partem sinistram, qui implebuntur¹²⁷⁷ omnia multa mala *et* committunt.¹²⁷⁸ ^bEt in[195]terrogauit sanctus Paulus: Istai qui¹²⁷⁹ peccauerunt, Domine? ^cRespondit ei angelus: Istai sunt, qui patris *et* matris {...} tulerunt *et* paenitentiam non egerunt, non publicam, non absconsa; peccauerunt¹²⁸⁰ propriam paenam.

8 Venit] Vinit V² om. Le · 8 uiros] {...} Le · 8 cum] in V²Le · 8 catenas ignis] cadenas ferreas V² catenis ignis Le · 9 ducebant] duceant V² · 9 illos ligatos] legatas illas V² eos ligatas Le · 9 diabolos] diaboli V² diabuli Le · 9 qui ... sinistram] om. V² {...} ad parte sinistra Le · 10 implebuntur] adimperent V² imperant Le · 10 omnia] omnibus V² homines Le · 10 *et* committunt] committere V² co{...} Le · 11 Istai] istae > isti StG^I isti V²Le · 11 qui] quid Le · 11 peccauerunt] commiserunt V² · 12 Respondit ... angelus] om. V²Le · 12 Istai] istae > istai StG^I · 12 Istai sunt] Isti sunt V² Ist{...} Le · 12 qui patris et matris] qui pater et mater V² patri et matri Le · 12 {...} tulerunt] honores tulerunt V² honorem tulerunt Le · 13-4 paenitentiam .. paenam] inter se ueniam non rogauerunt nec V² · 13 paenitentiam] penitentiam Le · 13 egerunt] {...} Le · 13 publicam] puplica Le · 14 peccauerunt] propter hoc proferunt Le · 14 paenam] p{...} Le

He came to another place. He saw men and women with fiery chains; [thus] bound, the devils led them,¹²⁸¹ who [i.e. the devils] stood to the left, [and] who urged(?)¹²⁸² all to commit many evils. And Saint Paul

¹²⁷³ The plural seems out of place here: more fitting would be *iste est*. Cf. the (slightly older) V².

¹²⁷⁴ This scene is most likely based on VSP §22, which described trees abundant in fruit, which are equated with God's gifts for the worthy. Note that StG^I has changed the verb from the pres. ind. to the future tense.

¹²⁷⁵ leg. *catenis*. Cf. *Le*.

¹²⁷⁶ leg. *diaboli*

¹²⁷⁷ leg. *impellebant*, or *implebant*

¹²⁷⁸ leg. *committere*

¹²⁷⁹ leg. *quid*

¹²⁸⁰ Silv. comm.: i.e. *patiuntur*.

¹²⁸¹ Cf. Carozzi, *Le voyage*: ‘sont liés avec des chaînes de fer brûlantes et conduits par des diables vers le côté gauche’ (p. 270). The verb *stabant* appears slightly out of context here; given the absence of it in either of the other two witnesses, it is possible that this was a later addition.

¹²⁸² There is a problem in the transmission here. The verb represents a departure from the other two manuscripts in which the phrase appears to be a characterisation of the devils. The sense of V² seems to have been ‘the devils, who would urge all to commit many evils’. I take it, then, that the reading in StG^I represents a corruption of this. The reading *implebuntur* is likely the

asked: “These, in what way did they sin, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are [those], who brought [their] father and mother <honour>¹²⁸³ and did not do penance, not public, not private; they suffer(?)¹²⁸⁴ [their] proper punishment.”

§3

- 15 ^aVenit in alio loco, uidit uiros *et* mulieres linguas foras maxillas
foras¹²⁸⁵ confixas de tres clauibus bulientes in oculis ipsorum cum pici
et plumbum *et* betumen *et* sulphor. ^b*Et* interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Isti
qi¹²⁸⁶ peccauerunt, Domine? ^c*Respondit* ei angelus: Isti sunt, [196] qui
falsum testimonium dixerunt *et* paenitentiam non egerunt, non publica,
20 non absconsa; *propter* hoc patiunt¹²⁸⁷ propria pæna.

15 Venit in alio] In tertio *Le* · 15 linguas] ling(.)as *StG*^l · 15-6 maxillas foras] max<...> *Le* · 16 foras] fo(r)ras/ *StG*^l · 16 confixas ... bulientes] confictas tetrīs clavis bublientis *Le* · 16 ipsorum] eorum *Le* · 16 pici] pi(t)c/i *StG*^l · 17 *et* plumbum] <...> *Le* · 17 betumen *et* sulphor] bitumen *et* suphur *Le* · 18-9 Isti] iste > isti *StG*^l · 18 qi] quid *Le* · 18 peccauerunt] <...>runt *Le* · 18 *Respondit* ... angelus] om. *Le* · 19 *et*] <...>rtuntur *et* *Le* · 19 paenitentiam] penitentiam *Le* · 19 publica] puplica *Le* · 20 absconsa] absco<...> *Le* · 20 *post* absconsa *add*] nec elimosina eos redemit *Le* · 20 patiunt] perferunt *Le* · 20 propria pæna] mala p<...> *Le*

He came to another place, he saw men and women with [their] tongues out, [their] jaws pierced by three nails, boiling in their eyes with tar and lead and pitch and sulphur. And Saint Paul asked: “These, in what way did they sin, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are [those], who gave false testimony and did not do penance, not public, not private; because of this they suffer [their] proper punishments.”

result of a scribal error, adding the abbreviation for *-ur* where it was not required. It can then be rendered as fut. or impf. act. 3pl. Alternative options could be to take the form in *StG*^l as an incorrectly expanded form of *impellere* ‘impel, urge’ (i.e. *implēbant*, which would match to some extent the *adimperant* and *imperant* of the other two manuscripts). I have tentatively chosen that option here. In line with the evidence of *V*² I have also taken *comittunt* as an error for *committere*.

However, in the text as it stands the subject is not unambiguous and it is not impossible that the scribe, trying to remedy what must have been a corrupt copy, was trying to write *implebant* and *commiserunt*, taking the phrase to refer to the sinners, atoning for the many evils they committed. I owe this suggestion to John Carey.

¹²⁸³ The text is evidently corrupt. Logic would dictate that we read ‘*honorem non*’, but the other two manuscripts have no negative in this clause either. Carozzi circumvents this by suggesting a form of *tollo* ‘destroy, steal’ (*op. cit.*, p. 270).

¹²⁸⁴ This sentence is a repeated formula in the text also present in the Long Latin version, but which is here confused in various places. The main idea seems to be that expressed in §3 *propter hoc patiunt[ur] propria pena*. Note that this sentence is also missing the *propter hoc*.

¹²⁸⁵ Possibly an error of duplication.

¹²⁸⁶ leg. *quid*

¹²⁸⁷ leg. *patiuntur*

§4

^aVenit in alio loco, uidit uiros *et* mulieres bullire in igne sup pice *et* petumen et sulphor *et* excrutientur¹²⁸⁸ cumpatri¹²⁸⁹ apud cummatris filioliis spiritalis *et* matrinis.¹²⁹⁰ ^b*Et* lacrimauit sanctus Paulus: Isti qui¹²⁹¹ peccauerunt, Domine? ^c*Respondit* ei angelus: Iste sunt, qui
25 conpatratum¹²⁹² fecerunt *et* non custodierunt, uenia inter se nos trogauerunt¹²⁹³ nec paeni[197]tentiam non egerunt; propter hoc agunt mala.

21 Venit in alio] In quarto *Le* · 21 bullire] punire *Le* · 21 igne sup] igneis poen<...> *Le* · 21-2 pice ... excrutientur] picis et bitumen et plumbo et stoporas et sarmenta compara<...> *Le* · 22 excrutientur] ē crutientur *StG*¹ · 22 apud] ápuð *StG*¹ aba<...> *Le* · 22 cummatris] cumpatri et *Le* · 23 matrinis] ma<...> *Le* · 24 qui] quid *Le* · 24 Respondit ... angelus] om. *Le* · 24 Iste sunt qui] Isti sun<...> *Le* · 25 conpatratum] cumpatratum *Le* · 25 uenia ... se] <...> *Le* · 25-6 nos trogauerunt] non rogauerunt *Le* · 26 nec] et *Le* · 26 paenitentiam ... egerunt] penitentiam inter se non petierunt <...> elemosinas non fecerunt *Le* · 26 agunt] águnt *StG*¹ · 26-7 agunt mala] mala ag<...> *Le*

He came to another place, he saw men and women boiling in fire, under tar and pitch and sulphur; and godfathers are tortured alongside godmothers by [their] spiritual children, and foster mothers [likewise](?).¹²⁹⁴ And Saint Paul cried: “Those, in what way did they sin, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are [those], who functioned as godparents and did not watch over [them], did not ask forgiveness among themselves, nor did they do penance; because of this they suffer evil things.”¹²⁹⁵

¹²⁸⁸ Jir. and Silv. ed.: *est crutientur*; Silv. comm.: uel *excrutientur* [?].

¹²⁸⁹ leg. *compates*

¹²⁹⁰ Silv. comm.: < *matrina*: ‘*quae aliquem de sacro fonte leuat, uel in Ecclesiam introducit, Gallis Maraine...*’ (Du Cange, s., du Fresne, Charles, *et al.* (eds.), *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, revised and expanded edn (Nior: L. Favre, 1883-7, orig. 1678), accessed via <<http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/>>, s.v. *matrina*).

¹²⁹¹ leg. *quid*

¹²⁹² Possibly a form of otherwise unattested *conpatratrus* ‘godparenthood’.

¹²⁹³ leg. *non rogauerunt*

¹²⁹⁴ I am following Ó Corráin (*op. cit.*) in this reading. A number of possible options may be considered for this sentence. One may take *cumpatri* and *cummatris* as the preposition *cum* with the respective nouns; however, they would then appear to have taken a 2nd declensions ending and *apud* would be rendered superfluous. Consequently I see no reason not to read *compatri* and *commatris* as acc.pl (with -is for -es), the latter governed by *apud*. The reading *matrinis* is ambiguous: Ó Corráin emends to *matrinae* here, grouping it with *cumpatri* and *cummatris*. The alternative would be to accept the reading as it stands and group it with *filioliis*, reading ‘and by their foster mothers’.

¹²⁹⁵ Again this is a variant of a formula repeated throughout this text, conveying the sense that they are being punished there for their sins, as in the preceding paragraph ‘*propter hoc patiunt propria pena*’.

§5

^aVenit in alio loco, uidit hominis in paenas ualidas sup plumbum *et*
 30 betumen bullire, habent sacgas¹²⁹⁶ plubias *et* casulas plumbias *et* in
 suas ardebant. ^b*Et dixit sanctus Paulus: Istae qui*¹²⁹⁷ *peccauerunt,*
Domine? ^c*Respondit ei angelus: Isti sunt episcopi et presbyteri, qui*
 castitatem perdiderunt *et* in ecclesias periurauerunt *et* causas malas
 iudicauerunt *et* pauperes *et* orphani inparsserunt¹²⁹⁸ *et* diuitias
 35 consentierunt¹²⁹⁹ *et* paenitentiam non egerunt nec ieiunia *uel*
 elymosinas [198] *non fecerunt; propter hoc mala aguntur.*

28 Venit...alio] {...}to *Le* · 28 hominis] homines *Le* · 28 paenas] penas *Le* · 28
post ualidas *add* stare *et* *Le* · 28 plumbum] {plum}bo *Le* · 29 betumen...habent]
 bitumen bullirae *et* habebant *Le* · 29 sacgas] *om.* *Le* · 29 plubias...plumbias]
 plumbias {...} *Le* · 30 suas] ipsis *Le* · 30 dixit] interrogauit *Le* · 30
 Istae...peccauerunt] {...}uid commiserunt *Le* · 31 Respondit...angelus] *om.* *Le* ·
 31 *et*] *om.* *Le* · 31 *post* presbyteri *add* diaconi, {...}aconi aut lectores,
 sanctimoniales *Le* · 32 perdiderunt...periurauerunt] per{...}unt *Le* · 32-3
 causas...iudicauerunt] malas causas nimis fecerunt *Le* · 33 *et* orphani] {...}anos
Le · 33 inparsserunt] in^aps^aserunt *StG*^I inpresserunt *Le* · 33 diuitias] diuites *Le* · 34
 paenitentiam] peniam *Le* · 34 egerunt] fecerunt *Le* · 34-5 ieiunia...elymosinas]
 ieiunio nec elimosynis *Le* · 35 non fecerunt] eos re{...}unt *Le* · 35 hoc] \hoc/ *in*
orange StG^I · 35 mala] male *Le* · 35 aguntur] águnt^I *StG*^I torquentur *Le*

He came to another place; he saw men boiling in mighty punishments
 under lead and pitch; they have leaden sackcloths and leaden
 chasubles and they were burning in them. And Saint Paul said:
 “Those, in what way did they sin, Lord?” The angel answered him:
 “Those are bishops and presbyters, who lost their chastity and swore
 false oaths in churches and judged bad judgements and did not show
 consideration¹³⁰⁰ for the poor and orphans and favoured riches and did
 not do penance, or observe fasts nor give alms; because of this they
 are being made to suffer evil things.

§6

^aVenit in alio loco, uidit diaconos¹³⁰¹ *et* alios clericos in paena stare
 super plumbum bullire: Alius *et* usque in benedictione, alius usque in

¹²⁹⁶ leg. *saccos*

¹²⁹⁷ leg. *quid*

¹²⁹⁸ Jir. ed. *inpraesserunt*. Silv. comm.: *inparserunt* quasi *non parserunt* [?] (adopted reading).

¹²⁹⁹ leg. *consenserunt*

¹³⁰⁰ I have adopted Silverstein's reading *inparserunt* here. Cf. VSP §35, where, however, the phrase used is *misertus est*. The reference to *diuitias* is inserted from VSP §37 *contententes in diuiciis suis*.

¹³⁰¹ Silv. ed. *diaconum*. However, since in the other examples these are all plural nouns, I suggest we might read *diaconos*. In ms, with expansion mark, not with dot as in Jir.

- belliculo,¹³⁰² alius usque in gemiculo.¹³⁰³ ^b*Et interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Istae qui*¹³⁰⁴ *commiserunt, Domine?* ^c*Respondit ei angelus: Isti*
40 *sunt, qui castitatem infringerunt et sacrificium Christi ore*
*debaolauerunt et in ecclesias periurauerunt, fuite et belinque*¹³⁰⁵
*fuerunt, numquam paenituerunt; propter hoc redunt*¹³⁰⁶ *mala*
paenitentia uel graue pænæ. [199]
^d*Et interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Isti sunt,*¹³⁰⁷ *qui castitatem*
45 *propeccant, quomodo hoc enim dant?*¹³⁰⁸ ^e*Respondit ei angelus: Agat*
paenitentiam, dum aduixerit, parcet ei Dominus peccatum suum.
^f*Et interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Dum tinuisti*¹³⁰⁹ *presbyter aut*
diaconus aut subdiaconus aut uirginis aut sponsa Christi qui posita
*peccatum facit, quomodo hoc enim dant?*¹³¹⁰ ^g*Respondit angelus:*
50 *Annos quatuor iaceas a terra pura, duas super lapide,*¹³¹¹ *et ipsos*
*annos iniusto paciant*¹³¹² *famem apud panem et sale et aqua [200] et*
parcet ei Dominus peccatum suum.

39 commiserunt] conmis\seī/ > commis\seī/ StG^l · 42 hocc redunt] hoc credunt
StG^l · 48 diaconus] hac > diac StG^l · 50 quatuor] .iiii.^{or} StG^l

He came to another place; he saw deacons and other clergy standing in
punishment above boiling lead: one up to the mouth(?),¹³¹³ another up
to the navel(?), another up to the knees. And Saint Paul asked: “Those,

¹³⁰² Silv. comm.: *belliculo, belliculum = simulatum praelium, ludicra pugna* (Du Cange, *Glossarium*). However, based on *VSP*, this must be for *umbillicum*. L2 reads *ad genua, umbillicum, labia, [supercilia 1xV], capillos*.

¹³⁰³ Silv. comm.: *gemiculo, pro genuculo, geniculo < geniculare = adorare* (Du Cange, *Glossarium*). That is, he took it as a form for ‘knee’ deriving from ‘to genuflect’. See Niermeyer, J.G., *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), s.v. *gemiculo* ‘knee’.

¹³⁰⁴ leg. *quid*

¹³⁰⁵ leg. *fures/furente et bellici* (?)

¹³⁰⁶ leg. *reddunt*

¹³⁰⁷ Alternatively leg. *sed* (?). The word—or even the *s*—could also have been introduced erroneously, given that the phrase is ubiquitous in this text.

¹³⁰⁸ Silv. leg. *emendant* ‘make amends’. Moreira, *Heaven’s Purge*, p. 134, takes the reading *enim dant* at face value and argues that the emendation is unnecessarily invasive and profoundly alters the meaning of the text. Her reasoning is partly based on her argument that the title of the text in this manuscript is a secondary addition by a scribe who “understood the vision through the lens of purgatory”. As the word *emendare* otherwise only occurs in the title, this is not an unreasonable suggestion. However, it is equally probable that the forms *enim dant* in the body of the text are the result of erroneous expansions. In the context of the text, the phrase must surely indicate a form of penance through which the sinners make amends for their sins (rather than receiving punishment), so that it does not seem to me that the emendation would profoundly alter the text.

¹³⁰⁹ leg. *tenuisti*. An alternative reading *tentus est* was suggested by Carozzi (*op. cit.*, p. 274).

¹³¹⁰ Silv. leg. *emendant*

¹³¹¹ leg. *lapidem*

¹³¹² leg. *patiantur*

¹³¹³ This section must refer to the lips, on the basis of *VSP*. Perhaps the word for ‘blessing’, as an item of speech, stands in for the body part.

what [sins] have they committed, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are [those] who broke [their vow of] chastity and vomited out(?)¹³¹⁴ the offering of Christ by mouth and swore false oaths in church, who were thieving(?) and war-like,¹³¹⁵ [and] never repented; because of this they pay with bad penance or grave punishment.”

And Saint Paul asked: “These are those who sin against chastity; how do they make amends for this?” The angel answered him: “One should do penance, while still alive; the Lord will forgive him his sins.”

And Saint Paul asked: “If you hold a position as priest or deacon or sub-deacon or virgin or bride of Christ who sins,¹³¹⁶ in what way do they make amends for this?” The angel answered: “Four years you should lie prostrate on pure earth, two on stone, and the same years the unjust¹³¹⁷ should suffer hunger with bread and salt and water and God will forgive him his sin.”

§7

- 55 ^aVenit in alio loco, uidit uiros *et* mulieres in lania¹³¹⁸ succedentes¹³¹⁹
^b*et* haec ardere qui miser¹³²⁰ tulerunt *et* crutiatur¹³²¹ ei cum grande igne.
^cEt interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Istae qui commiserunt, Domine?
^dRespondit ei angelus: Isti sunt, qui malesides¹³²² portauerunt *et*
succederunt¹³²³ menses¹³²⁴ *et* alia fructa *et* numquam paenituerunt;
propter agunt.

¹³¹⁴ This appears to be a rarely attested word, perhaps derived from 2 *bajulare* (Du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v. *bajulare*: *exagitare vexare, molestare*), possibly with de- ‘out’. Carozzi suggests ‘vomiting’ (*op. cit.*, p. 273). Alt. this might be related to *debaelo* in the compositions known as the *Hisperica Famina*, l. 330, in the sense of ‘carrying away, stealing’. I owe this reference to John Carey.

¹³¹⁵ The form is problematic as it stands. It is likely intended as a form of either *furtum* ‘theft’ or *fūro* ‘rage, rave’. Another option would be *furtim* ‘stealthily’. The form *furte* (misspelled *fuīte*) could have resulted from a missing n-stroke originally indicating the form as *furente*. The n-stroke is missing at a number of places in the text. The form *bellinque* possibly indicates *bellici* ‘war-like’.

¹³¹⁶ I am uncertain how to translate *posita* or resolve the tense in this line. Carozzi translates ‘qui a été exposé’, but equally expresses his doubt (*op. cit.*, p. 274). Moreira (*op. cit.*, p. 133) does not comment on it, translating ‘who sin’.

¹³¹⁷ As it stands this is dat./abl.sg. of *iniusto*. Carozzi (*op. cit.*, p. 274, n. 588) suggested emending to *in luto* ‘in the mud’, without incorporating it into his translation. I have here followed Moreira (*op. cit.*, p. 134), who appears to take it as an error for *iniusti* (though she does not comment on it), translating ‘the unjust should reconcile’. Alternatively—retaining its present case—perhaps ‘for (their) injustice’.

¹³¹⁸ leg. *lanea*

¹³¹⁹ leg. *succedentes*

¹³²⁰ Silv. leg. *miserere*; or perhaps *miseri*. Alternatively, Carozzi has suggested *miseris tollerunt*, proposing *tollerunt* again on the basis that the author has confused *tulerunt* with *tollerunt* (*op. cit.*, p. 271).

¹³²¹ leg. *cruciantur*

¹³²² Silv. leg. *malas ideas*; Carozzi leg. *sidus*

¹³²³ leg. *succenderunt*, or alternatively *sub-caederunt*

He came to another place; he saw men and women in flaming woollen garments¹³²⁵ and [he saw] these burning, who, miserably(?), wore [them] and they were tortured with great fire. And Saint Paul asked: “Those, what [sins] have they committed, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are those who brought about a bad storm(?)¹³²⁶ and set crops on fire¹³²⁷ and other produce and never repented; because of this they suffer.”

§8

- 60 ^aVenit in alio loco, uidit homines in caballum ereas¹³²⁸ et iumenta
aerea et alia [201] quadropedia furauerunt¹³²⁹ et super ipsas ardebant
sicut flamma ignis. ^bEt interrogauit sanctus Paulus: Istae qui
commiserunt, Domine? ^cRespondit ei angelus: Istae sunt, quia¹³³⁰
cauallo¹³³¹ et iumenta et alia quadropedia inuiolauerunt¹³³² et
65 numquam paenituerunt; propter hoc habent propria paena.¹³³³

59 caballum] caba\l/lum *StG*^l · 62 sicut] siq̄ *StG*^l · 63 inuiolauerunt]
inu\i/iolauerunt *StG*^l

He came to another place; he saw men on leaden horses and leaden mules and other quadrupeds they had stolen¹³³⁴ and on these they burned like a flame of fire. And Saint Paul asked: “These, what [sins] have they committed, Lord?” The angel answered him: “These are those who stole horses and mules and other quadrupeds and never repented; because of this they have [their] proper penance.”

¹³²⁴ leg. *messes*

¹³²⁵ Carozzi previously argued this is a garment, suggesting linen. He was followed in this by Ó Corráin, who also explored the option, first suggested by Silverstein, that this paragraph refers to sorcery, suggesting *lamia*, *lama* Gk ‘witch, bogey’ (*op. cit.*, handout). Cf. Niermeyer, *Lexicon*, s.v. *lanea*.

¹³²⁶ Silverstein suggested *malas ideas* ‘bringers of bad idea’ in the sense of idolaters, as in some copies of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. In this context a form of *maleficium* might also be considered. A further option might be *malefidus* ‘bad faith, faithlessness’. However, Carozzi (*op. cit.*, p. 272) suggested a form of *sidus* ‘tempest’, which would seem to fit the context. The correct reading ought then to be *malum sidus*.

¹³²⁷ Alternatively ‘cut down crops’.

¹³²⁸ leg. *caballos aereos*

¹³²⁹ leg. *fuert* (?)

¹³³⁰ leg. *qui*

¹³³¹ leg. *caballos*

¹³³² leg. *inuolauerunt*

¹³³³ leg. *propriam paenam*

¹³³⁴ The announcement that the quadrupeds were stolen seems premature here. A solution would be to emend to *fuert*.

§9

- ^aVenit in alio loco, uidit uiros *et* mulieres cultellus in oculis ipsorum mittebant bulientes ferraturas de aratras *et* de strabos *et* thastaros,¹³³⁵ *et* alias in oculis ipsorum mittebat¹³³⁶ apud sulphur *et* plumbum *et* [202] betumen, *et* ibi ardebunt.¹³³⁷ ^bEt interrogabat *sanctus* Paulus: Isti qui commiserunt, Domine? ^cIsti *sunt*, qui con multa ferramenta inuolauerunt *et* numquam paenituerunt.

68 Isti] iste > isti *StG*^l · 70 isti] iste > isti *StG*^l

He came to another place; he saw men and women [who] were thrusting daggers into their eyes and were thrusting boiling ironwork from ploughs and hoes(?) and rakes(?) and other things into their eyes, amid sulphur and lead and pitch, and there they burned. And Saint Paul asked: “Those, what [sins] have they committed, Lord?” “These are those who stole many iron tools and never repented.”

§10

^aVenit in alio loco, uidit pleno caelo de pecunia multa. ^bEt interrogauit *sanctus* Paulus: cui rem pecunia multa, Domine? ^cRespondit ei angelus: Delateres *et* toritores.¹³³⁸

72 rem] rém *StG*^l · 73 toritores] tontores > toritores *StG*^l

He came to another place; he saw a heaven full of many sins(?). And Saint Paul asked: “[for whom this location with?] many sins(?), Lord?” The angel answered him: “Slanderers and torturers”.¹³³⁹

§11

- 75 ^aEt interrogauit *sanctus* Paulus: Domine, ubi sunt parentes mei? ^bRespondit ei angelus: In infernum usurantur.¹³⁴⁰ ^cEt dixit *sanctus* Paulus: Domine, ubi est pater meus *et* mater [203] mea *et* fratris mei *et* amici mei *et* cumpatris mei uel parenticula mea grandis *et* parvi?

¹³³⁵ Silv. leg. *de aratris et de scabris et de rastris*. Ó Corráin suggests the scribe read ‘ett hastaros’ for ‘et rastros’ (*op. cit.*, handout).

¹³³⁶ leg. *mittebant*

¹³³⁷ leg. *ardebant*

¹³³⁸ Silv. leg. *traditores*

¹³³⁹ This line is clearly corrupt and the paragraph as a whole gives the impression of having suffered in transmission. The phrase *cui rem* is perhaps the result of an original reading *cur est*, and is doubtful as it stands. Given the nature of the answer, the first phrase must be asking who deserves the place mentioned, but if we read ‘a heaven full of much wealth’ the answer does not appear to make good sense. Perhaps *pecunia* is the result of a palaeographical error for *peccantia* in the sense ‘sins’.

¹³⁴⁰ leg. *urantur*

^d*Respondit ei angelus: In inferno usurantur.* ^e*Et eiectauit se sanctus*
80 *Paulus super inferno et coepit amariter plorare.*

^f*Et interrogauit Dominus angelus Raphahel: Quid ploras, frater*
Paulus? ^{ff}*Uenit Raphahel angelus ad sancto Paulo: Quid tale grauiter*
pluras, frater Paulus?

^g*Et ille dixit: Agat pius Deus licet me propter parentes meos*
85 *intrare in inferno.* ^{gg}*Et ille dixit: Habeant [204] ueniam, ego spatiosus et*
multo misericors et pius fui super uos.

^h*Dominus dixit ad sancto Paulo: Certo tibi dico: Parentes tuos*
usque ad nono geniculo; missus est camelos in euangelio uocatur finis
multis, qui parentes sancti Pauli traxerunt de inferno.

And Saint Paul asked: “Lord, where are my relatives?” The angel answered him: “They are being burned in hell.” And St Paul said: “Lord, where are my father and my mother and my brother and my friends and my godfathers and my kinsmen both distant and close? The angel answered him: “They are being burned in hell.” And Saint Paul threw himself upon the hell and began to weep bitterly.

And Raphael, the angel of the Lord, asked: “Why do you weep, brother Paul?” The angel Raphael went to Saint Paul: “Why do you cry so violently, brother Paul?”

And he said: “May the holy Lord allow me to enter hell on account of my relatives.” And He said: “May they have pardon; I have been generous¹³⁴¹ and very merciful and affectionate to you.”

The Lord said to Saint Paul: “Truly, I say to you: Your parents in the ninth degree¹³⁴²; the camel, summoned in the gospel to many ends(?),¹³⁴³ was sent, who has dragged Saint Paul’s parents out of hell.”¹³⁴⁴

¹³⁴¹ Carozzi previously suggested ‘generous’. The word *spaciosus* does not appear to occur regularly in a metaphorical sense, but see the entry ‘*spatiouse*: lente, moderate’ in Niermeyer.

¹³⁴² *usque ad nono geniculo*: Niermeyer, *Glossarium*, s.v. *geniculo* ‘knee; degree of parentage’. Ó Corráin has argued this is a translation of an Old Irish legal term *co nómad n-ó* (*op. cit.*, handout; see also chapter 2.3.2, p. 64, n. 266); the continental laws where he found parallels to this phrase only list fifth, sixth and seventh degree relationships.

¹³⁴³ Or ‘mentioned in the gospel at the very end’(?).

¹³⁴⁴ The reference to the camel is decidedly odd. I can only speculate as to its relevance. Silverstein and Carozzi refer to the camel in Matt. 19:24/Luke 18:25/Mark 10:25 and the *Acts of Peter and Andrew*, in neither of which the camel functions as *psychopomp*. Since there is thus no straightforward explanation for its presence, perhaps it was intended as a pun or interpretive reading of some sort: the bible reads ‘it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God’. Perhaps this idea is transferred here to the case of Paul’s family. Paul, we may imagine, would have only a slim chance of actually seeing his family rescued out of Hell: yet God grants him this favour. Thus, in a way, the camel has gone through the needle. This is especially appropriate if *usurantur* was understood as a pun on ‘usurers’.

FINIT. FINIT. FINIT.